

# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Countless millions of miles from Earth is the galaxy of Yarna, and in that galaxy is the planet Elekton. On this planet – in the desolate land of Vorg – one man, Trigo, has led his people to greatness and founded The Trigan Empire.

A short distance from the gates of Trigan City, a party of convicted criminals were labouring in their chains to build a new road . . .

Work, work, you animals!



It came from out of the sun, so that no one noticed it till it was upon them . . . a blackpainted craft. Its guns stabbed flame, and the guards were scattered.



AAAAAAAH!

The craft landed by the shrinking prisoners, and two black-garbed figures got out . . .



I . . . I am Tassig!

Which of you is named Tassig? . . . Speak!

The blast of a pistol shattered the chain to which the prisoner was secured.



Get into the craft, Tassig! . . . Move!

More guards ran out from the city in time to see the strange black craft streaking towards the horizon.



A prisoner has been set free!

Raise the alarm!

Trigan air patrols searched for the mystery craft in vain. A few days later the Emperor Trigo was working on matters of State . . .



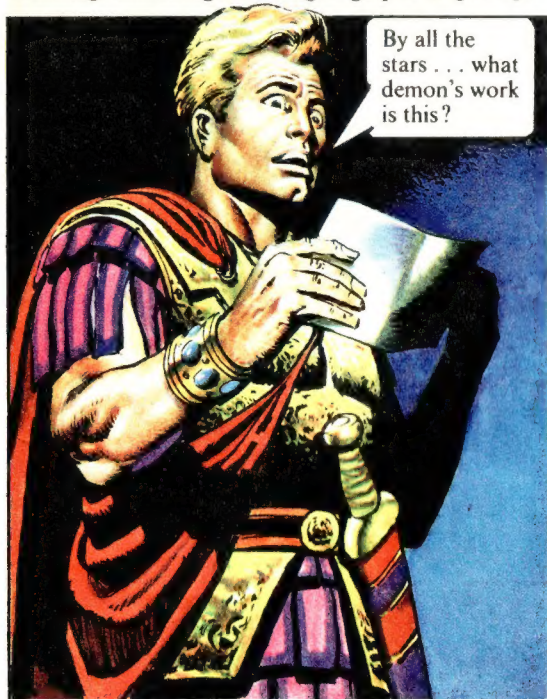
And then he saw . . .

Strange . . . who could have pushed *that* under my door?

AAAAAH! . . . I have had enough of paper work for today . . .



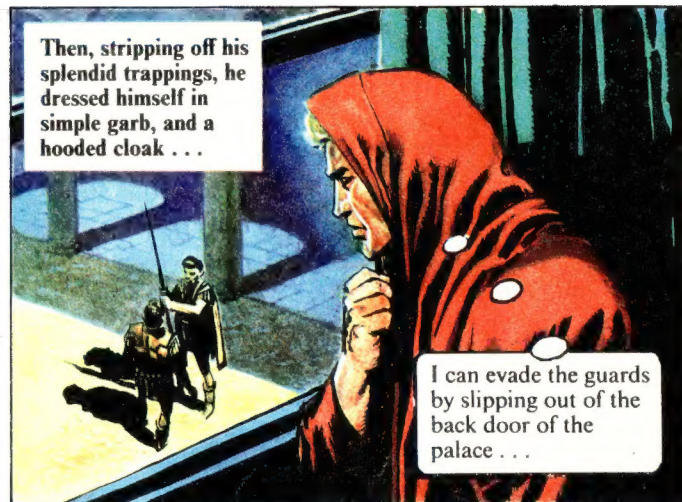
There was a message written on the piece of paper . . . a message that brought a strangled gasp to Trigo's lips!



The Emperor's next actions were strange. First, he burnt the message . . .



Then, stripping off his splendid trappings, he dressed himself in simple garb, and a hooded cloak . . .



All through the night, he rode across the plain of Vorg. Dawn found him in a high-walled gorge far beyond the plain. There he halted his kreed and looked about him.



It was nearly sunset when Trigo rode, unrecognised, out of his own city gates on a kreed.

All right, fellow, you can pass through . . . but remember next time . . . the gates close at sunset!



Menacing eyes watched him from behind black masks . . .

I will shoot him down!



Meanwhile, back in Trigan City, the imperial palace was in a turmoil . . .

Sound the alarm! . . . Call out the city guards! . . . The emperor has disappeared!

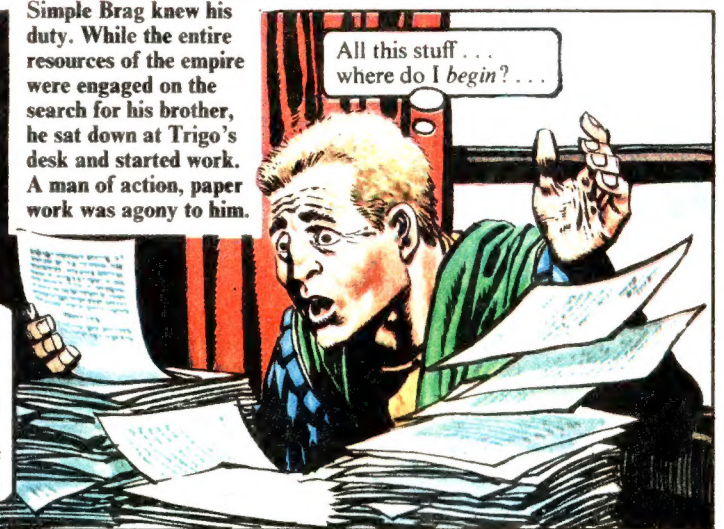
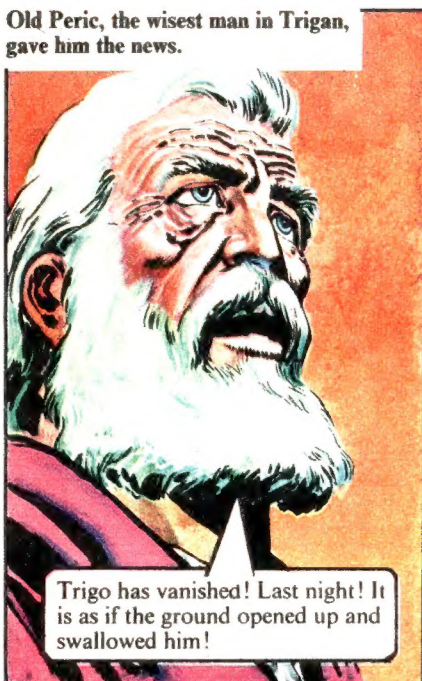
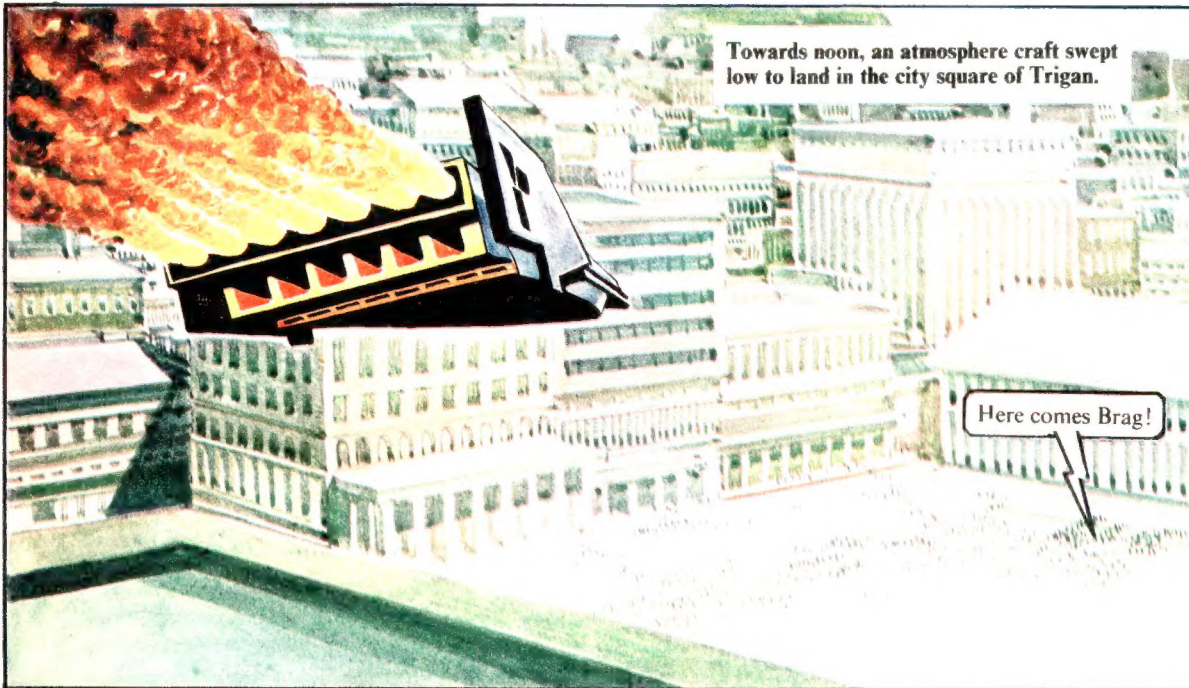


Next Week: A mysterious message for the Emperor's brother



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

A mysterious message has caused the Emperor Trigo to steal out of his own city in disguise and journey to a rendezvous in a gorge beyond the Plain of Vorg on the planet Elekton . . .

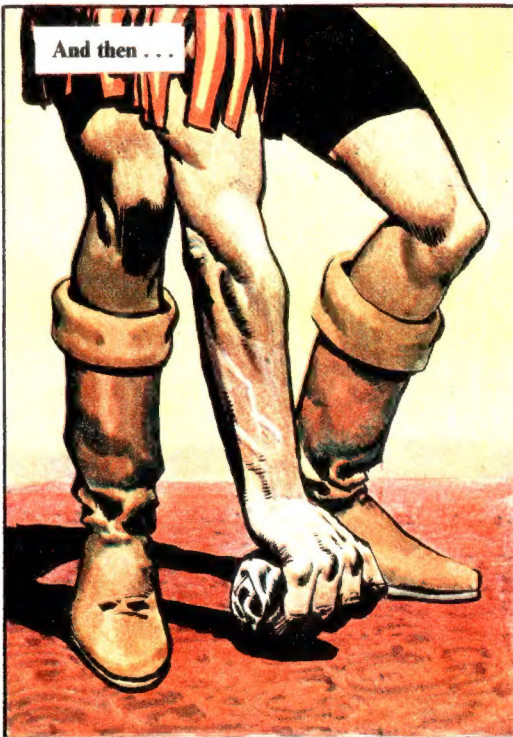






Later that day, Brag's son Janno entered the imperial apartments with his comrade Keren.

Father! . . . where is he?



And then . . .



It was the fateful message which had sent Brag on his strange journey. Janno read it aloud.

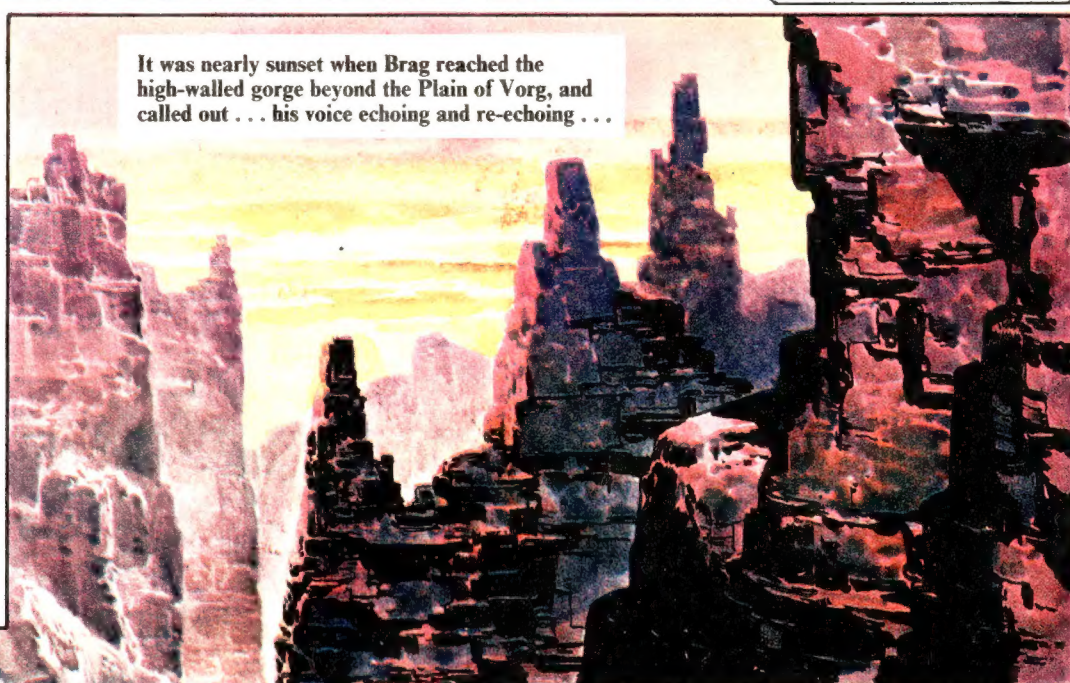
Why, it's a message to my father, written in Uncle Trigo's own hand . . . it says . . . "Brother. The empire is in mortal danger. Speak to no one. You are surrounded by traitors. Burn this letter, and meet me in the gorge beyond the plain" . . . and the rest is burnt.

Grimly, the comrades met each other's gaze.



Well . . . what do we do?

Speak to no one . . . and go after my father!



It was nearly sunset when Brag reached the high-walled gorge beyond the Plain of Vorg, and called out . . . his voice echoing and re-echoing . . .



TRIGO! . . . TRIGOOOOOO!



A harsh voice made him spin round, his hand flying to the hilt of his sword.

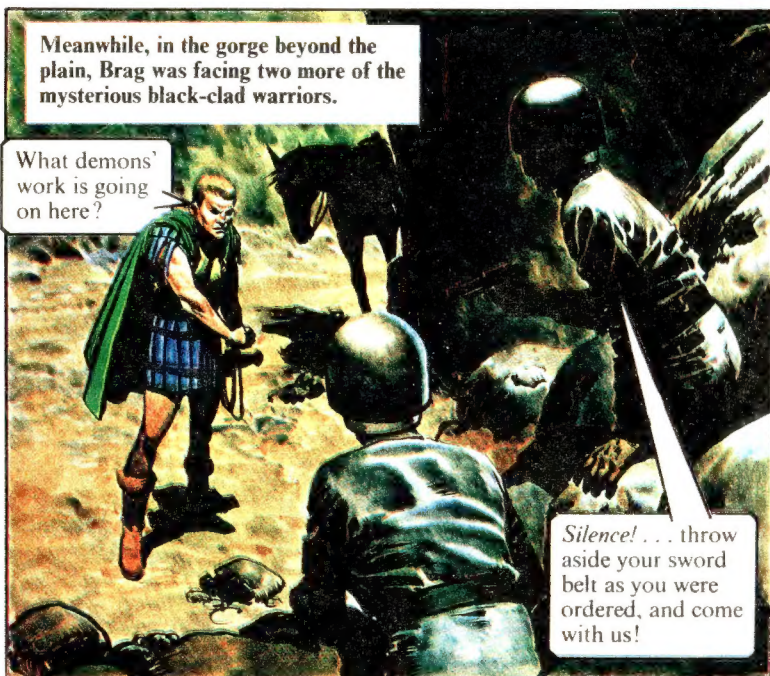
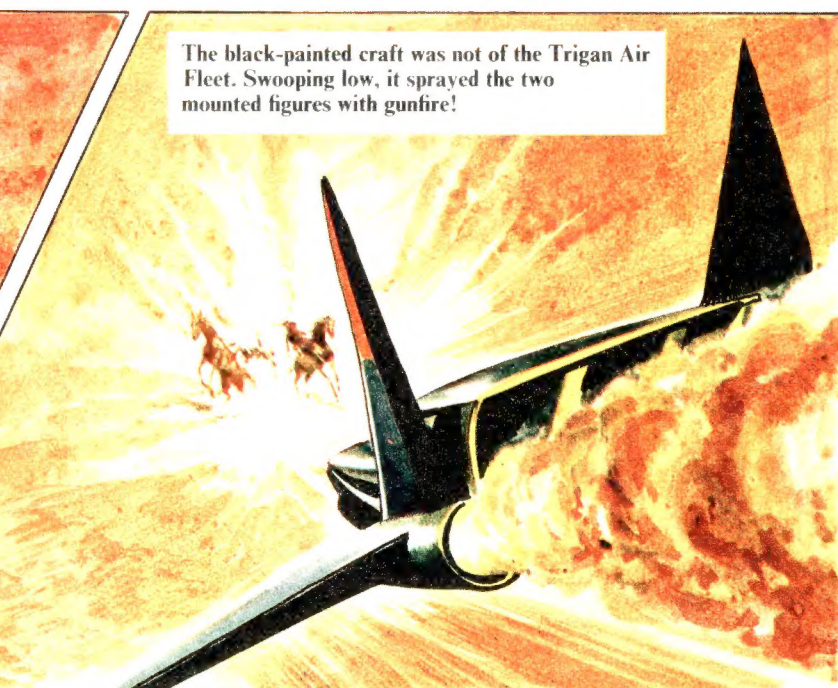
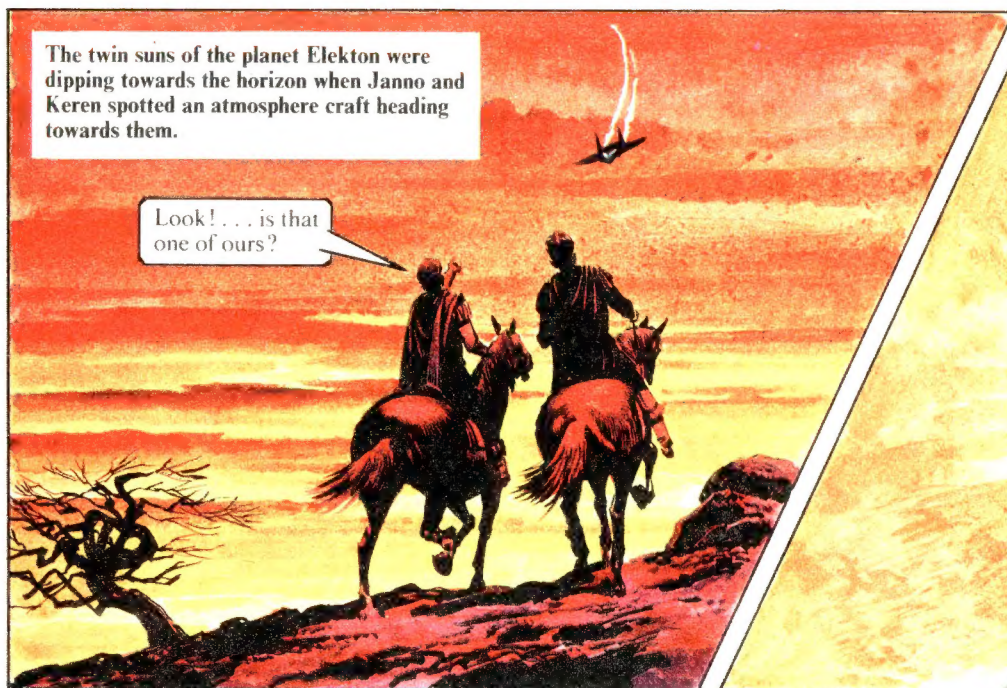
So! . . . How neatly they all ride into our trap!

Next Week: Janno and Keren face The Black Guards



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

A mysterious message from the Emperor Trigo has caused his brother Brag to steal out from Trigan City and journey to a rendezvous in a gorge beyond the plain of Vorg. Brag's son Janno and his friend Keren decide to go after Brag . . .







And there, in a vast cavern, he came face to face with his brother, the Emperor of the Trigans!

Brag, you fool . . . What do you mean by leading me into this accursed trap?

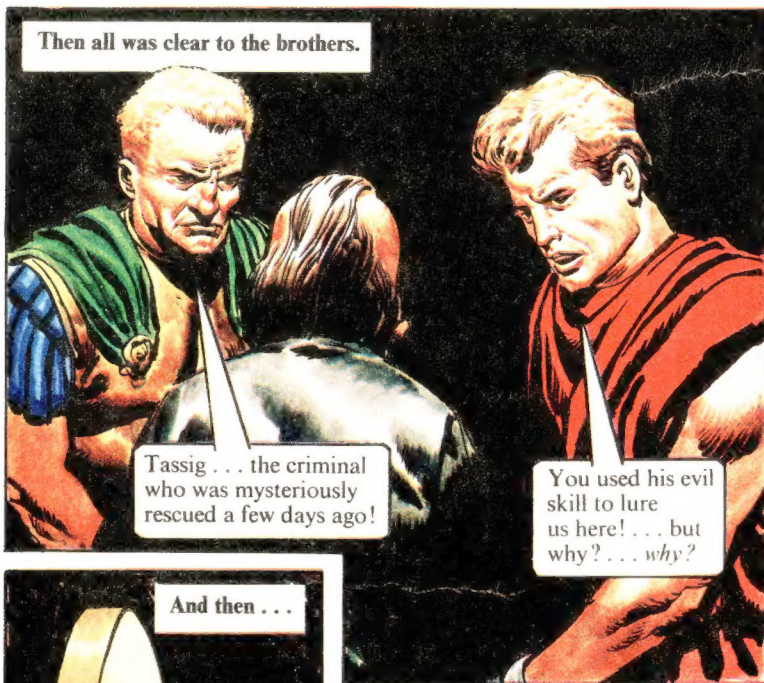
What . . . what do you mean, Trigo? . . . I came here because of a letter you left for me!



One of the warriors sneeringly indicated a sly-faced man who stood nearby.

You *both* received letters which you believed to have been written by the other. Permit me to introduce the man who *really* wrote the letters . . .

Tassig is the name, sirs . . . though I say it myself, the finest forger on Elekton!



Then all was clear to the brothers.

Tassig . . . the criminal who was mysteriously rescued a few days ago!

You used his evil skill to lure us here! . . . but why? . . . why?



Before Trigo's question could be answered, a group of black-clad warriors entered the cavern, and threw a limp figure at Brag's feet!

There is your son, Brag . . . now we have the whole Imperial brood!

Janno!

A woman of radiant beauty gazed down at them, and there was a hard edge of mocking malice in her voice.



And then . . .

Sound the gong to inform her Highness that all is ready!

Her Highness? . . . What Highness?

There was a fanfare of war horns . . . and the brothers stared in astonishment at the figure which appeared through the curtains behind the throne.



Who?

By all the demons of Daveli!



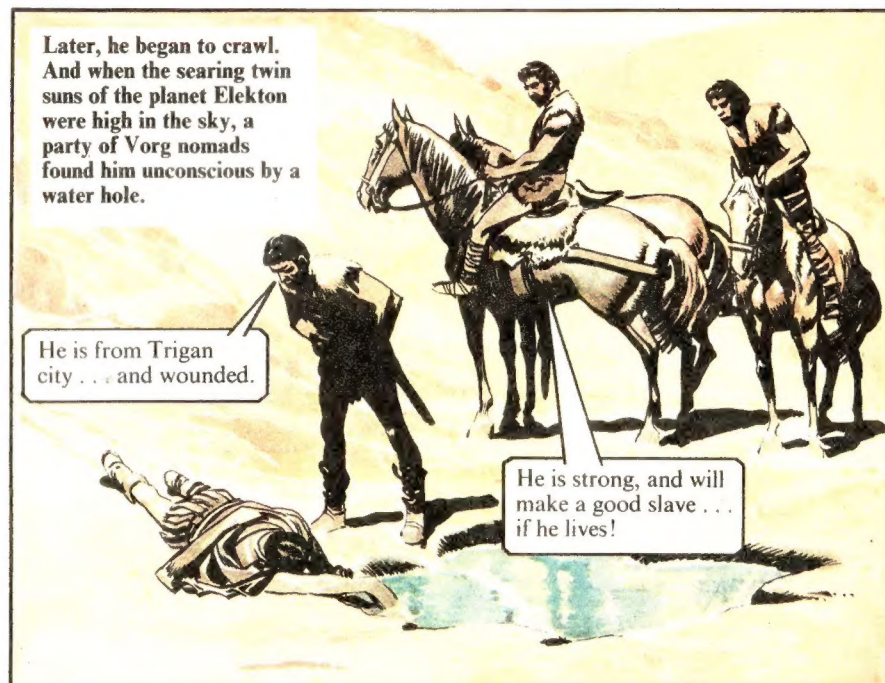
Greetings, Trigo . . . and you, Brag . . . Do you not remember me?



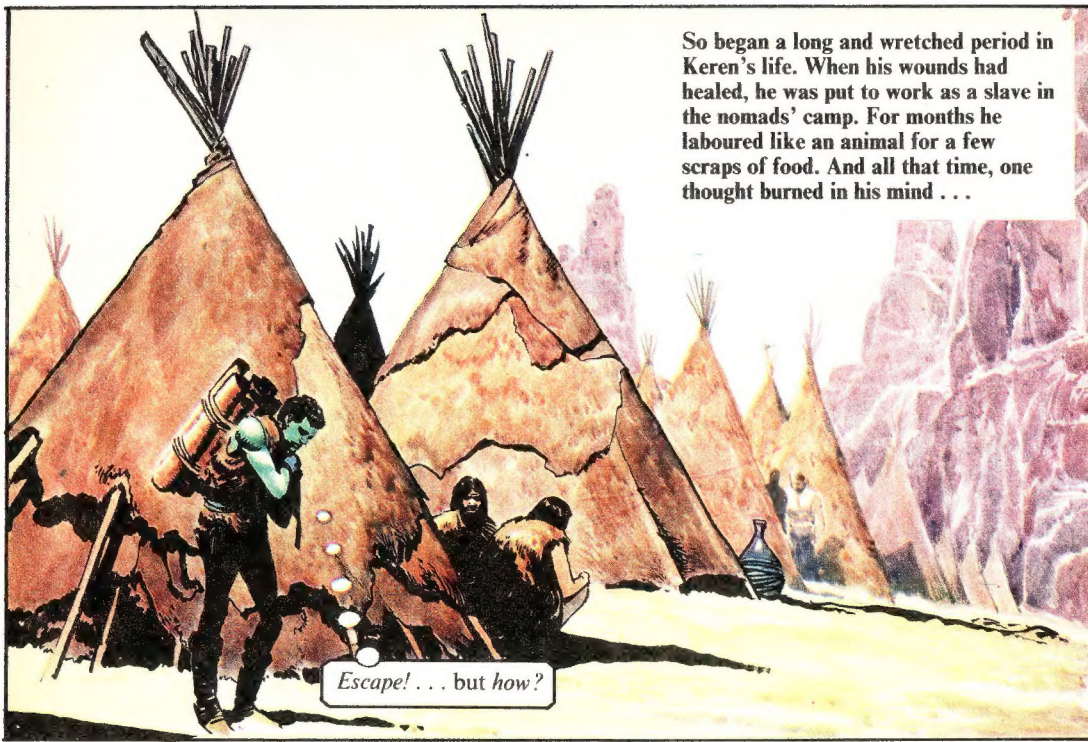
# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The Emperor Trigo, his brother Brag, and nephew Janno are the prisoners of the sinister black guards in a cavern beyond the Plain of Vorg.

They come face to face with a beautiful woman who claims to know them . . .







So began a long and wretched period in Keren's life. When his wounds had healed, he was put to work as a slave in the nomads' camp. For months he laboured like an animal for a few scraps of food. And all that time, one thought burned in his mind . . .

Escape! . . . but how?



His chance came one night. His captors tethered him like an animal during the night, but on this occasion he had managed to steal a knife . . . and was soon free of his tether . . .

Now . . . to deal with the sentry . . .

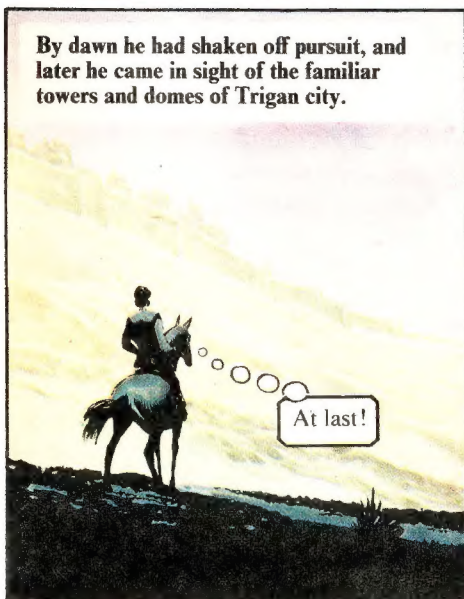


The spearman guarding the Kreed herd saw the dark figure coming at him out of the gloom. He yelled the alarm and brought his weapon to the ready.

The slave is free!

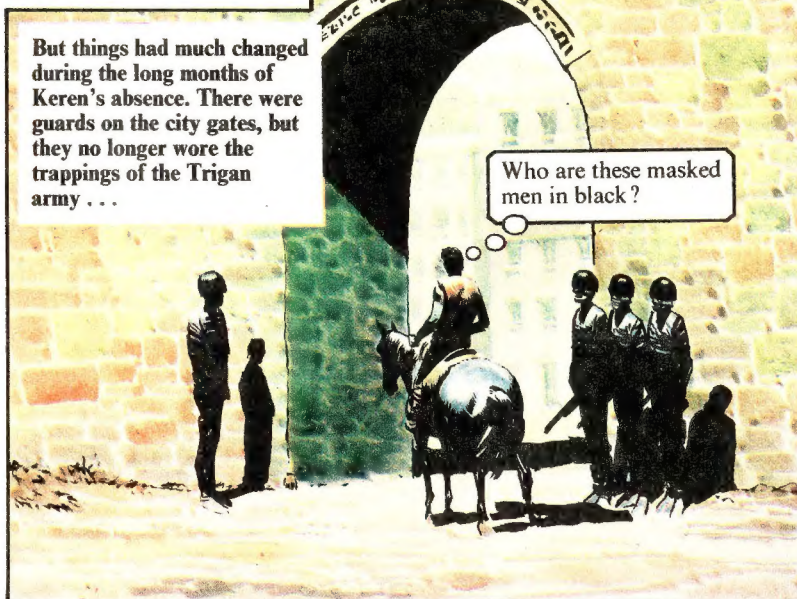


Ducking a wild spear thrust, Keren drove his bunched fist into the man's jaw, and leapt to the nearest Kreed.



By dawn he had shaken off pursuit, and later he came in sight of the familiar towers and domes of Trigan city.

At last!



But things had much changed during the long months of Keren's absence. There were guards on the city gates, but they no longer wore the trappings of the Trigan army . . .

Who are these masked men in black?



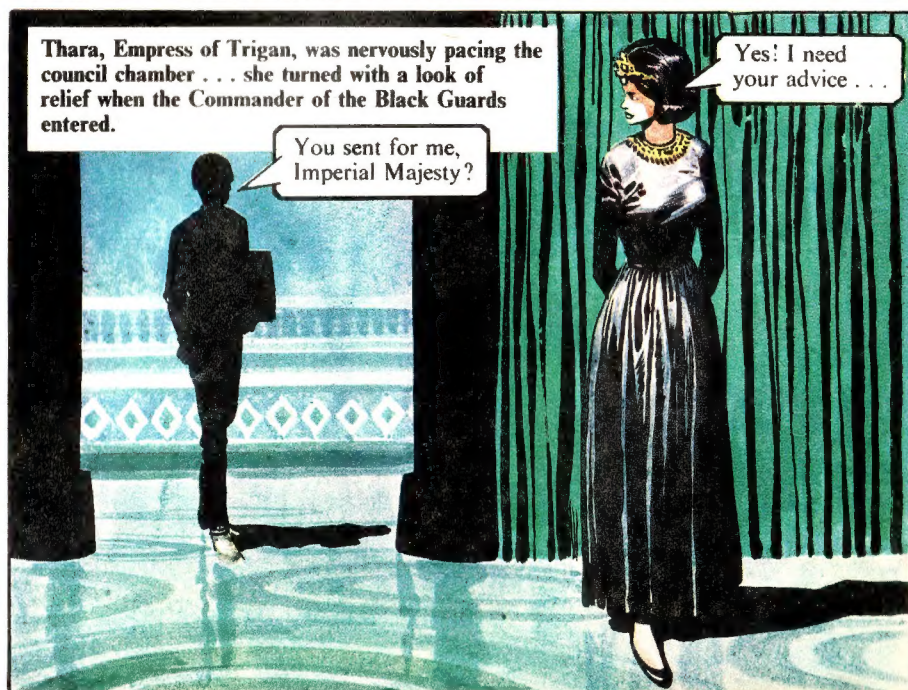
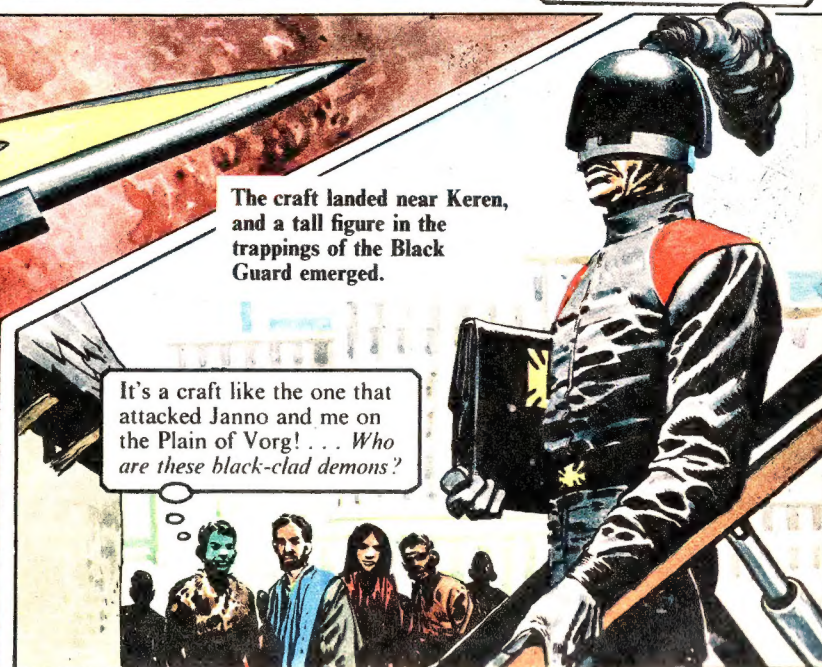
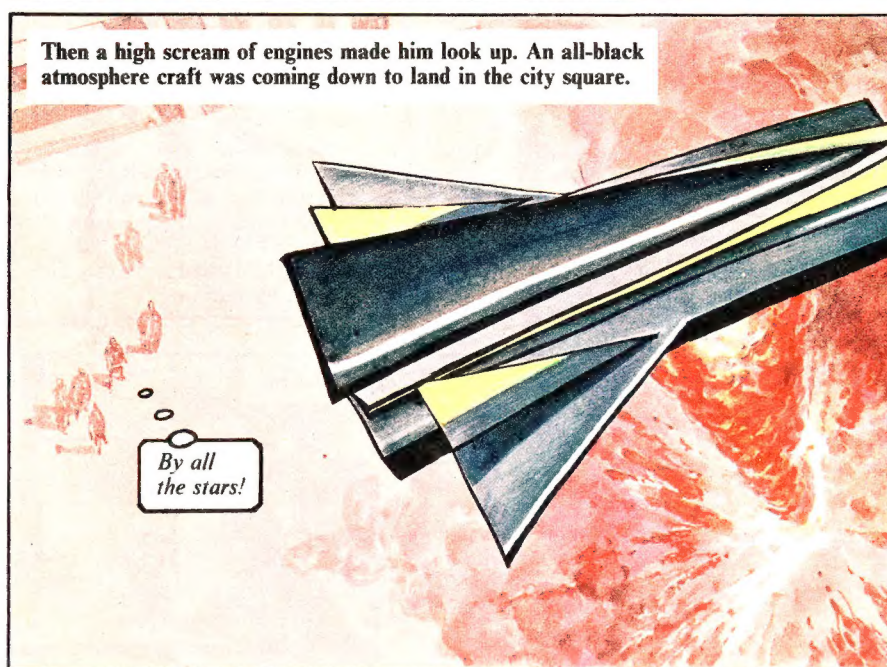
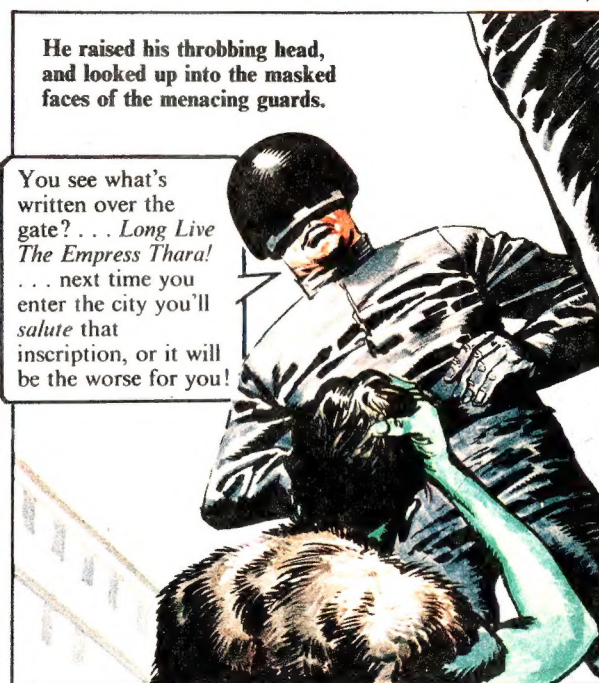
There was an inscription carved deeply into the stonework over the gates . . . and Keren read it wonderingly . . .

Long live the Empress Thara?



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

When Keren returns to Trigan City after spending many wretched months as a slave of a nomad tribe, he is astonished to see strange masked warriors guarding the gates. What he does not yet know is that the Emperor Trigo, Brag and Janno have been eliminated . . . and that Trigo's niece, Thara, has become Empress . . .

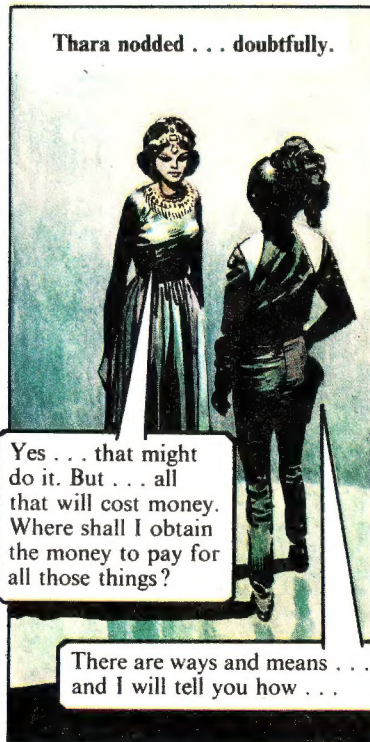






Commander . . . the people have only half-accepted me as their Empress. What can I do to win their loyalty and their love?

The answer is quite simple Imperial Majesty . . . indulge them . . . distribute free food and provide them all with slaves . . . stage lavish games every day in the arena . . . you will soon win their love!



Thara nodded . . . doubtfully.

Yes . . . that might do it. But . . . all that will cost money. Where shall I obtain the money to pay for all those things?

There are ways and means . . . and I will tell you how . . .



Meanwhile, down in the city square, Keren had come face to face with his friend Salvia, daughter of Peric.

Keren! . . . thank the stars . . . we thought you were dead!

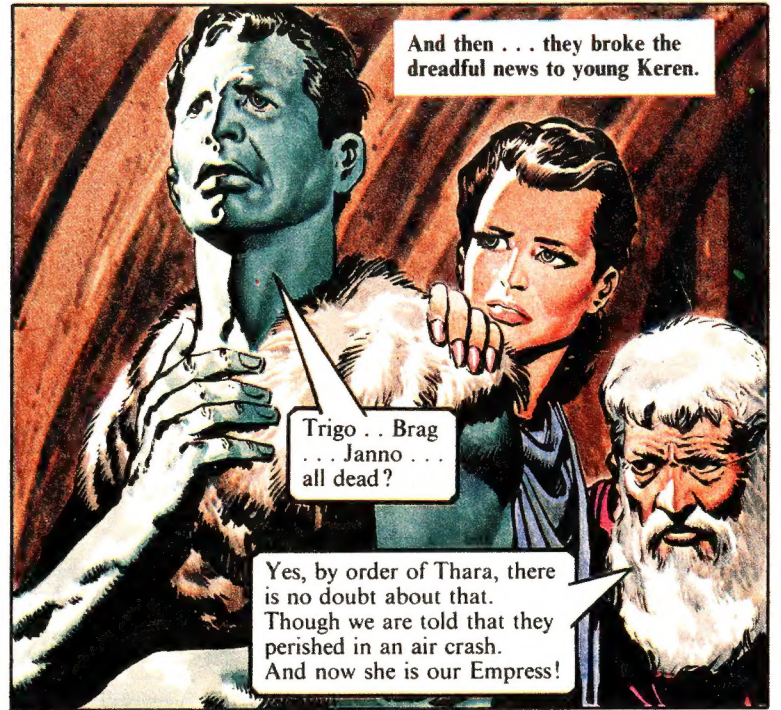
Salvia . . . For pity's sake tell me what's going on in Trigan!



She led him to a humble house in a poor part of the city, and there was her father.

Keren! My boy!

What's this? . . . The wisest man in the Empire, and the friend of Trigo . . . living in poverty!



And then . . . they broke the dreadful news to young Keren.

Trigo . . . Brag . . . Janno . . . all dead?

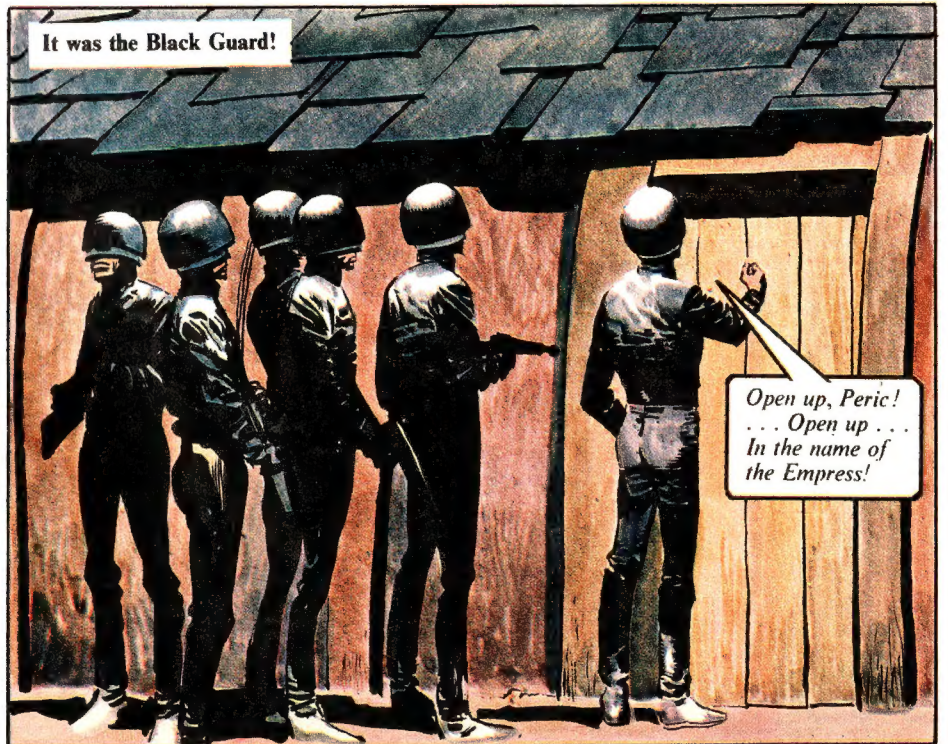
Yes, by order of Thara, there is no doubt about that. Though we are told that they perished in an air crash. And now she is our Empress!



I refused to serve her, so I was stripped of all my possessions. I was lucky not to have had a slave's collar hammered around my throat . . . but it may still come to that!

Father! . . .

Salvia cried out in alarm, as there came a thundering knock on the door.



It was the Black Guard!

Open up, Peric! . . . Open up . . . In the name of the Empress!



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The Emperor Trigo and his nearest heirs have been mysteriously eliminated, and Trigo's niece Thara, has become Empress of the Trigan Empire with the aid of the sinister Black Guards. Young Keren is at the house of wise old Peric when Black Guards thunder on his door and demand admittance . . .



Thara nodded, and turned to the Commander of the Black Guards.





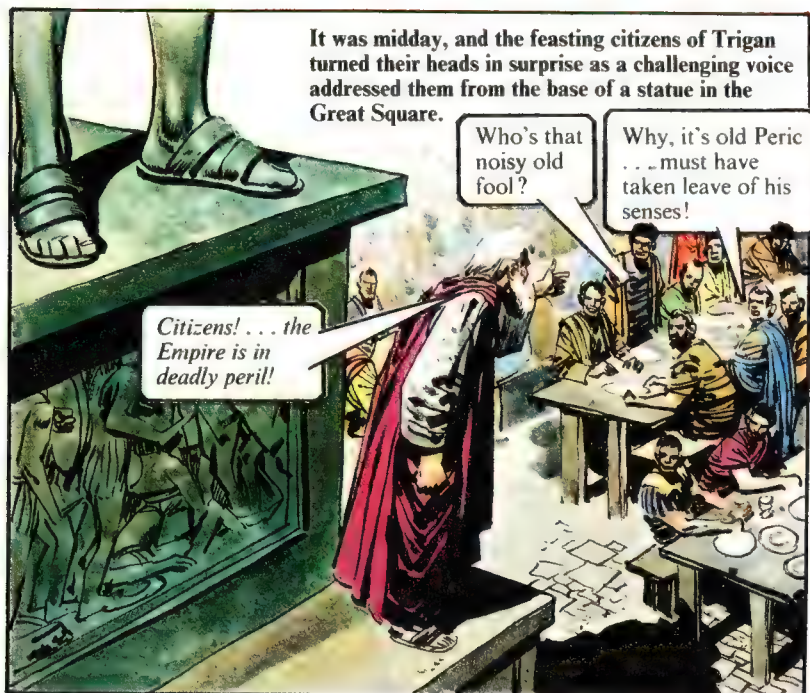




# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The Emperor Trigo and his nearest heirs have been mysteriously eliminated, and Trigo's niece Thara has become Empress with the aid of her sinister Black Guards.

To make herself popular with the people, Thara lavishes on them free food and entertainment. To pay for this, she cuts the armed forces and withdraws garrisons from the frontiers and endangers the safety of the Empire . . .



It was midday, and the feasting citizens of Trigan turned their heads in surprise as a challenging voice addressed them from the base of a statue in the Great Square.

Citizens! . . . the Empire is in deadly peril!

Who's that noisy old fool?

Why, it's old Peric . . . must have taken leave of his senses!

Peric lashed the gorging multitude with his tongue.



While you feast and play, our far-off frontiers lie unguarded! . . . will you *still* feast and play when our enemies are battering at the very walls of the city?



A group of the dreaded Black Guards looked on . . . and . . .

Shall we silence his wagging tongue?

No! . . . let the rabble do our work for us!

Already the angered mob was drowning Peric's voice with contemptuous cries.



Fools! Fools! . . . Can't you see that the Empire is crumbling about your idle ears?

Go away, old man!

What right has he to call us idle?

Knock him down!



Then they began to throw . . . and the old man was knocked senseless to the ground.

Down with him!

It was some time before Peric's daughter Salvia and her friend Keren managed to fight their way through to the prostrate figure. By that time, the old man had suffered badly at the hands of the mob.



How could you do this to my father? . . . he was only warning you for your own good!

It's no use, Salvia . . . they'll never listen to reason . . . let's take your father back to the house.

The Empress Thara had witnessed the whole scene from the balcony of the Imperial Palace. She turned to the Commander of the Black Guard, her face grave . . .



Is it true what he says? . . . is the Empire *really* in danger?

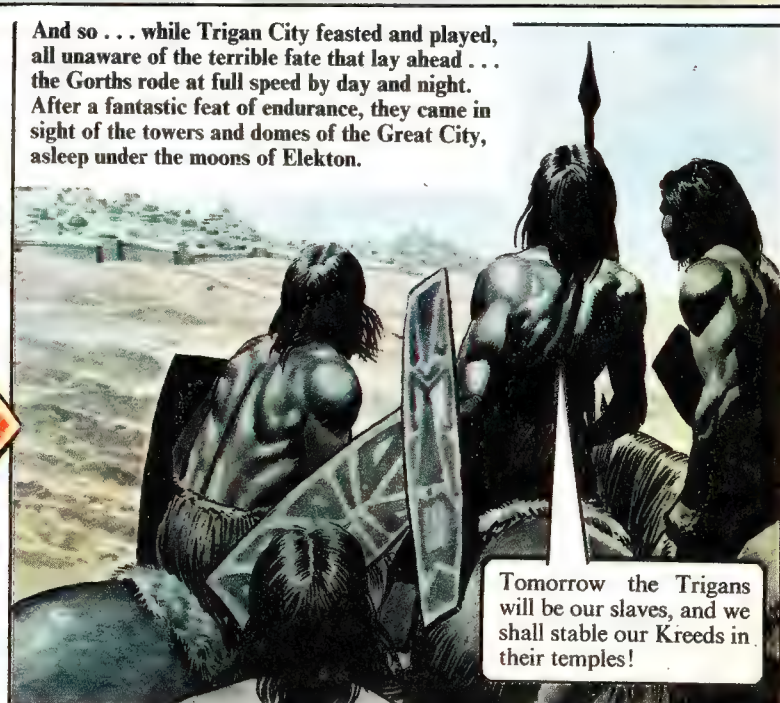
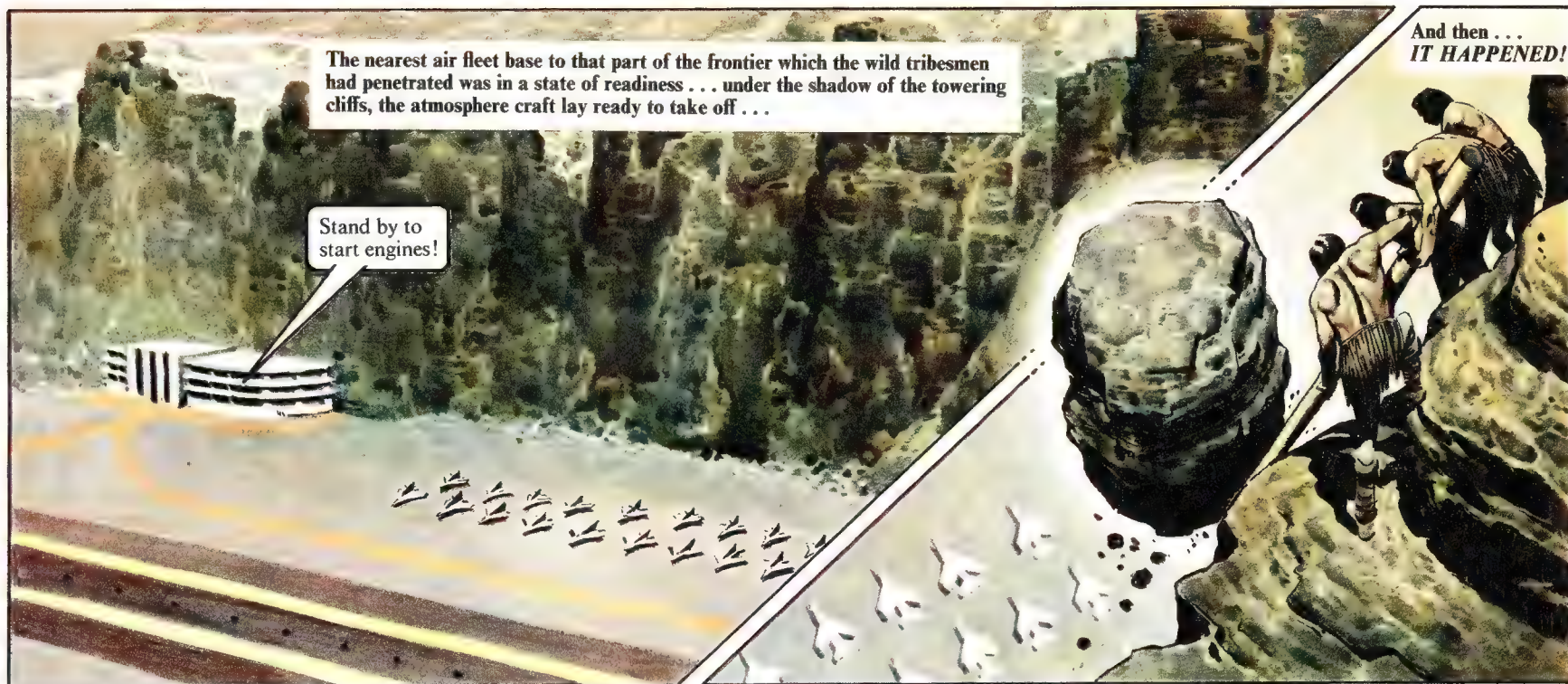
The old fool greatly exaggerates, Imperial Majesty . . .



The Commander was smooth . . . comforting . . .

True, a small handful of Gorth tribesmen have penetrated the frontier at one point, but they are too far away to cause us any concern in Trigan City. And I have given orders for the nearest air fleet to attack and wipe them out!





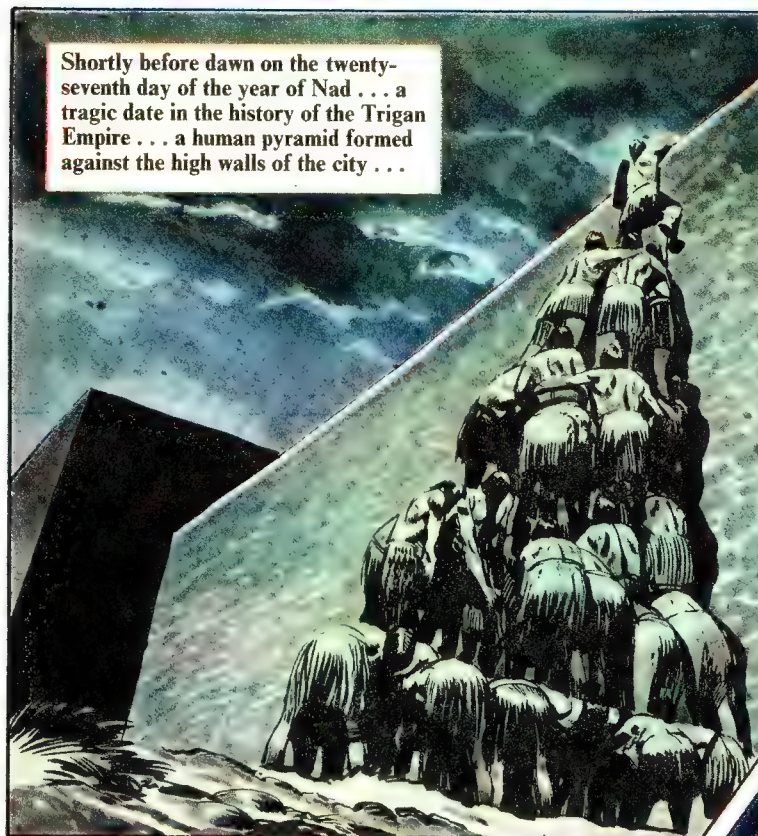


# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The Emperor Trigo and his nearest heirs have been mysteriously eliminated, and Trigo's niece Thara has become Empress with the aid of her sinister Black Guards.

Under Thara, the Trigan Empire has fallen into a decline. While the citizens feast and play savage Gorth tribesmen penetrate the frontier and march, unseen, upon the great city . . .

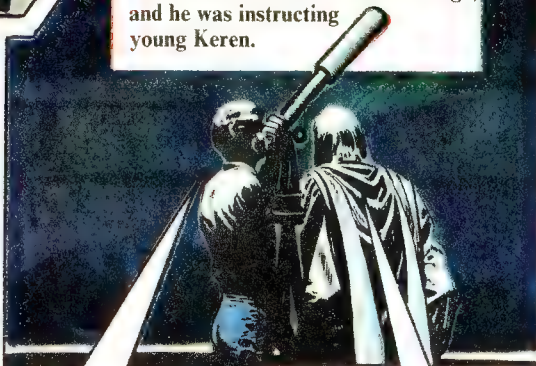
Shortly before dawn on the twenty-seventh day of the year of Nad . . . a tragic date in the history of the Trigan Empire . . . a human pyramid formed against the high walls of the city . . .



A sentry of the evil Black Guard yawned and longed for the dawn and the end of his vigil . . .



Meanwhile, on the roof of his house, old Peric was observing the pre-dawn sky. Despite his circumstances, the great scientist had not lost his thirst for knowledge, and he was instructing young Keren.



Suddenly they were interrupted . . .

What was that?



His vigil ended all too soon . . . and for ever!



Amazing! . . . So there are many galaxies like ours!

Yarna is only one of a million such galaxies, Keren. Out there in space there may be planets similar to Elektion, where men like ourselves strive against the same terrible problems!



They peered over the roof . . . and saw . . .

GORTHS!

The Gorths are in the city!



We must raise the alarm in the palace . . . if we can reach the palace before those painted barbarians!





Waking Salvia, they crept stealthily out of the house and headed for the palace. They had not gone far before they realised that the streets were teeming with the wild tribesmen . . .

They have broken into the city in force!

And they're all making for the palace!

When they reached the corner of the great square, they knew they were too late. Shrill warning trumpets sounded from the ramparts of the palace. And there came the heavy thud of a battering ram on the gates!

The Empress was aroused by the din. Soon the commander of her guard burst into her presence, his face pale under the hideous black mask.

Imperial Majesty! . . . The Gorths are at the palace gates!

She addressed him bitterly.

Fool! Fool! . . . You told me we had nothing to fear from the barbarians . . . that they were few in number and far away!

It's too late to blame me for that, Thara! Your personal atmosphere craft is waiting on the ramparts . . . if you want to live to see the dawn you'd better come quickly!

But Thara shook her head.

I have brought Trigan City to this with my senseless folly, and if the city is to be destroyed, I will be destroyed with it!

Please yourself . . . woman!

Soon after, when the commander and his men took off from the palace ramparts in the imperial craft, the flames were already licking the walls of the great building.

By the time the Gorths axes were shivering the door of her apartment, Thara had donned the Imperial Crown and was awaiting her fate.

I have failed . . . but at least I can die like an Empress of the Trigans!



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The Emperor Trigo and his nearest heirs have been mysteriously eliminated, and Trigo's niece Thara has become Empress. But now the barbarian Gorths have broken into the city, Thara's sinister Black Guards have deserted her, and the Gorths are beating down the door of the Empress's chamber!

Above the pounding of the Gorth axes on the door, Thara heard her name called.



It was old Peric. He saw the determination in Thara's eyes, and he seized the Empress by her slender wrist.



Peric's will prevailed. And so, when the Gorths burst in ...

Where is she? ... where is the woman who ruled Trigan?

Here's her crown!

The barbarian leader put the jewelled crown on his unkempt head and grinned savagely at his followers.



Enjoy the fruits of your victory, my warriors! The city is yours! Take everything you want. The Trigans are your slaves ... load them with chains and make them serve you hand and foot!



Meanwhile, in a secret rock-carved vault far below the imperial palace ...

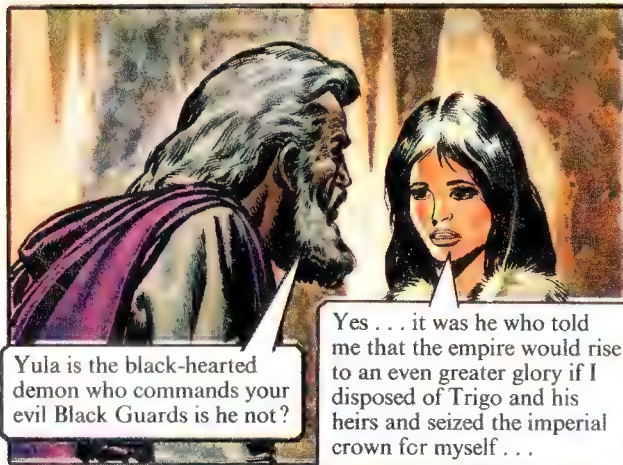


The Gorths will never find us here ... I designed these hidden chambers and passageways on the orders of the Emperor Trigo when I built the palace. They are known only to me ... Now that he is no more ...

Presently, old Peric faced the Trigan empress accusingly.

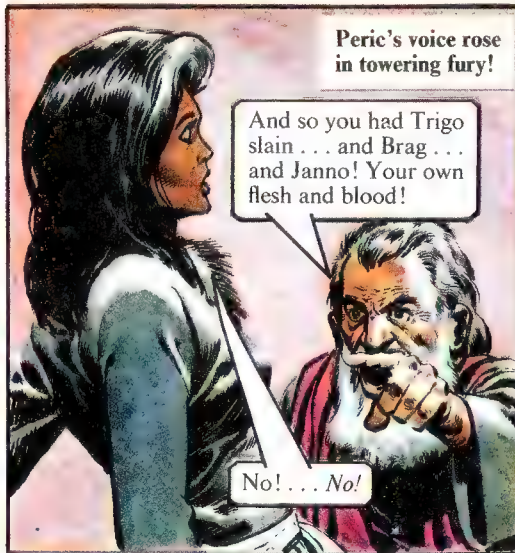






Yula is the black-hearted demon who commands your evil Black Guards is he not?

Yes... it was he who told me that the empire would rise to an even greater glory if I disposed of Trigo and his heirs and seized the imperial crown for myself...



Peric's voice rose in towering fury!

And so you had Trigo slain... and Brag... and Janno! Your own flesh and blood!

No!... No!



Thara blurted out the astounding news...

They still live!

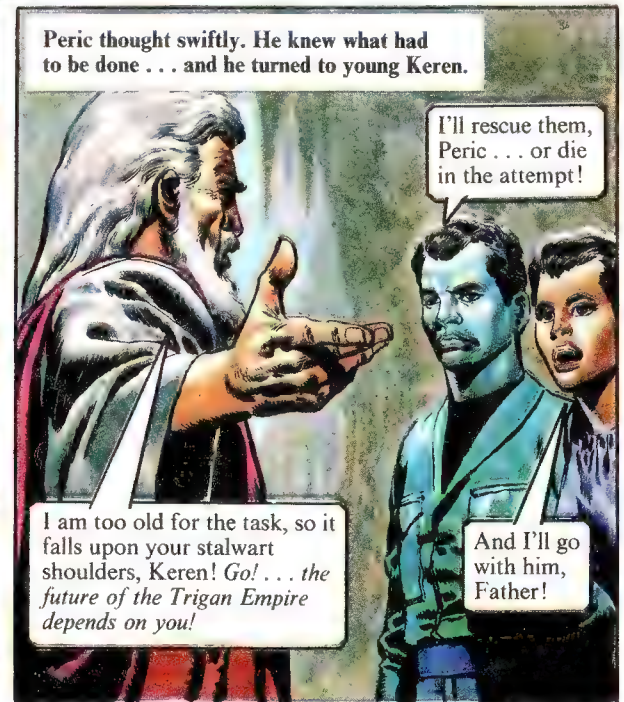
Wha-a-a-t?

Trigo... Brag... Janno? ... still alive!

Thara explained... "Yula demanded their deaths, but I could not bring myself to destroy my uncles and my cousin... so I handed them over to phonic pirates..."



"... so now they are galley-slaves aboard a pirate vessel, somewhere in the sea of Azov!"



Peric thought swiftly. He knew what had to be done... and he turned to young Keren.

I'll rescue them, Peric... or die in the attempt!

I am too old for the task, so it falls upon your stalwart shoulders, Keren! Go!... the future of the Trigan Empire depends on you!

And I'll go with him, Father!



By noon, the savage Gorths were busy looting and burning the city. No one saw Keren and Salvia creep out of a secret exit and approach the lines of tethered kreds in the great square...

Choose your mount... when I give the order, ride for the city gates!



But the alarm was raised as they thundered out of the open gates... and a hail of shots howled over their bent heads!

De Lawrence...

Next Week: Escape into danger



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The barbarian Gorths have captured the city of Trigan and overthrown the Empress Thara. Keren and Salvia are making a desperate attempt to leave the city in search of the rightful Emperor Trigo, who alone can save the situation . . .

Salvia's kneed fell wounded beneath her, but Keren caught her in his arms and lifted her on to his own careering mount.



The Gorths fired a few more random shots after the fugitives, and then . . .

Shall we mount and go after them?

Why bother? . . . what are the lives of two more Trigans when we have the city and everything in it?

Towards evening they drew near the mountain range beyond the plain . . . and there they saw . . .

And so, by good fortune, the two comrades escaped from the stricken city, soon they were deep in the wilderness of Vorg.

It's a long journey to the Sea of Azov, Keren.

And that's only the beginning . . . once we reach there we have to find the galley on which Trigo and the others are enslaved . . . and then find some means to snatch them away!

Look! . . . the wreckage of an atmosphere craft!

They dismounted and clawed their way up the craggy slope.

By the stars! . . . it's the Imperial Trigan craft!

The Black Guards used it to escape from the city!

Soon they were examining the wreckage. It was all too clear that the Black Guards had paid for their crimes in the disaster.

Not a single survivor!

But Keren was mistaken!

Aaaaah! . . . Ahhhh! . . . Help me!

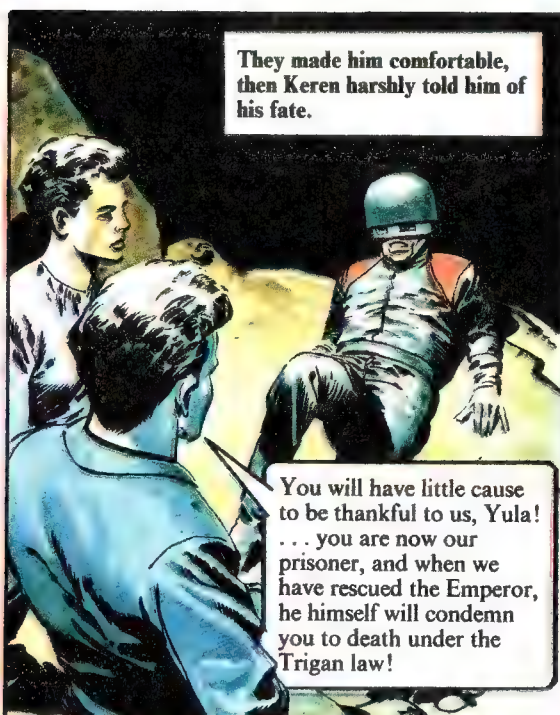
It's Yula! . . . the commander of the Black Guards himself!





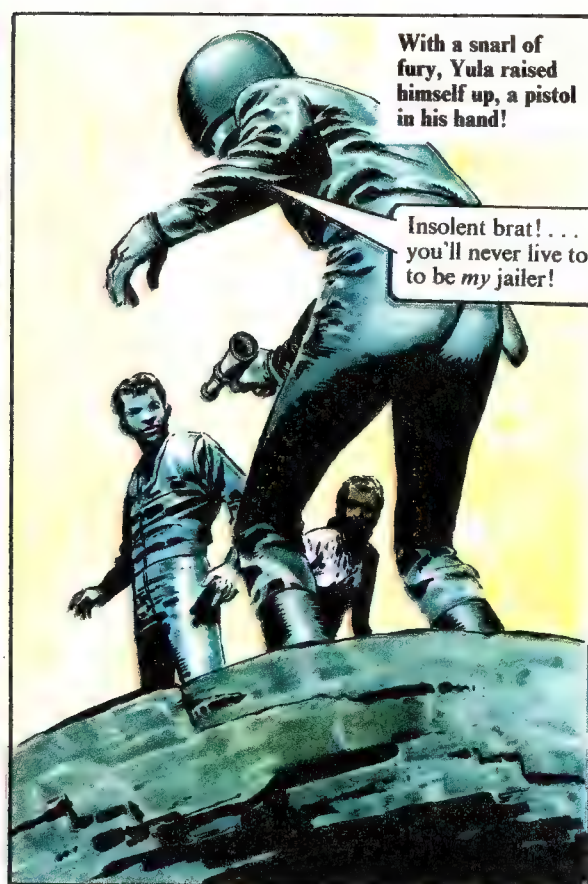
They helped the scoundrelly Yula to his feet.

Thank the stars you came! ... that fool of a pilot ... he flew too low and lost his visibility in a dust storm ... and then ... straight into the mountain! ...



They made him comfortable, then Keren harshly told him of his fate.

You will have little cause to be thankful to us, Yula! ... you are now our prisoner, and when we have rescued the Emperor, he himself will condemn you to death under the Trigan law!



With a snarl of fury, Yula raised himself up, a pistol in his hand!

Insolent brat! ... you'll never live to be my jailer!



Keren leapt, his arm flailing ... the pistol discharged with a flash of searing light!



Keren staggered back, his hands pressed to his eyes ...

... While Yula missed his footing and fell with a howl of despair ... to destruction!

Aaaaaaaaagh!



In the silence that followed, Keren slowly took his hands from his face ...

Are you ... All right?

I am ... blind! ... blind!

Alone on that nightmare peak, the terrible implications of their plight burned in their minds ...

This means the end of the Trigan Empire!

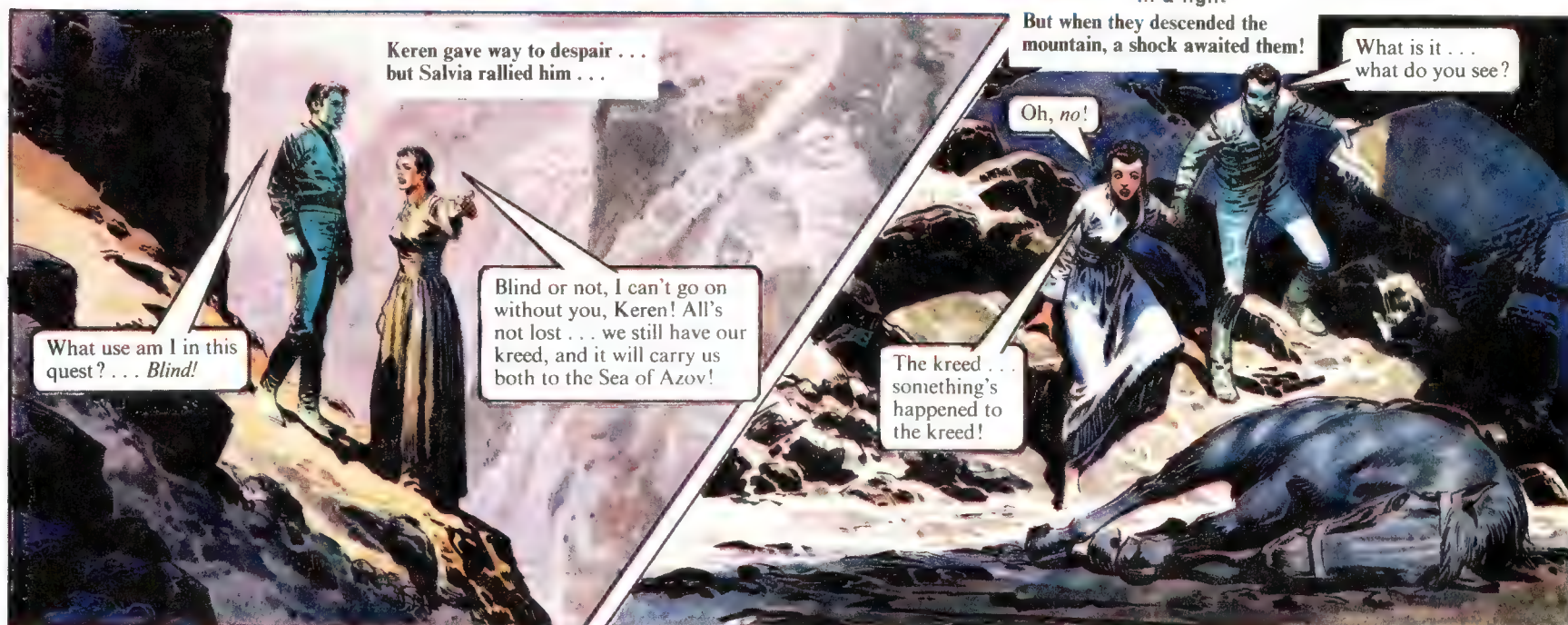
A girl and a blinded boy alone in the merciless wilderness ... what hope had they of freeing the Emperor of the Trigans?



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The barbarian Gorths have captured the city of Trigan, and Keren and Salvia are journeying to the Sea of Azov to rescue the Emperor Trigo from a slave-galley.

And then . . . tragedy . . . Keren is blinded in a fight!





Looking up, Salvia saw a circle of veiled riders staring down at them.



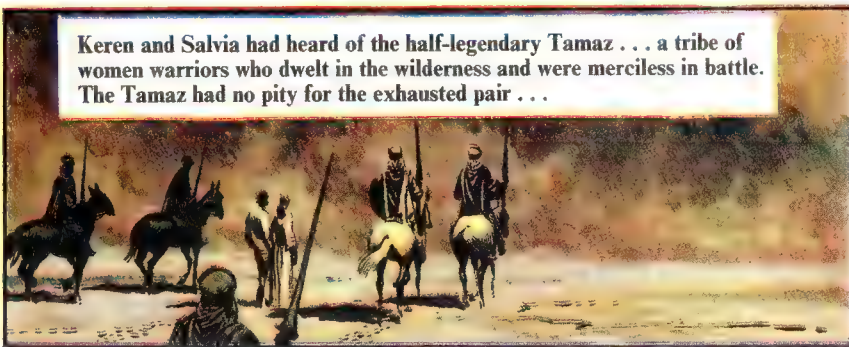
Tamaz warriors!

One of the warriors unveiled . . . to disclose the features of a stern and beautiful woman!



Get to your feet . . . you are coming with us!

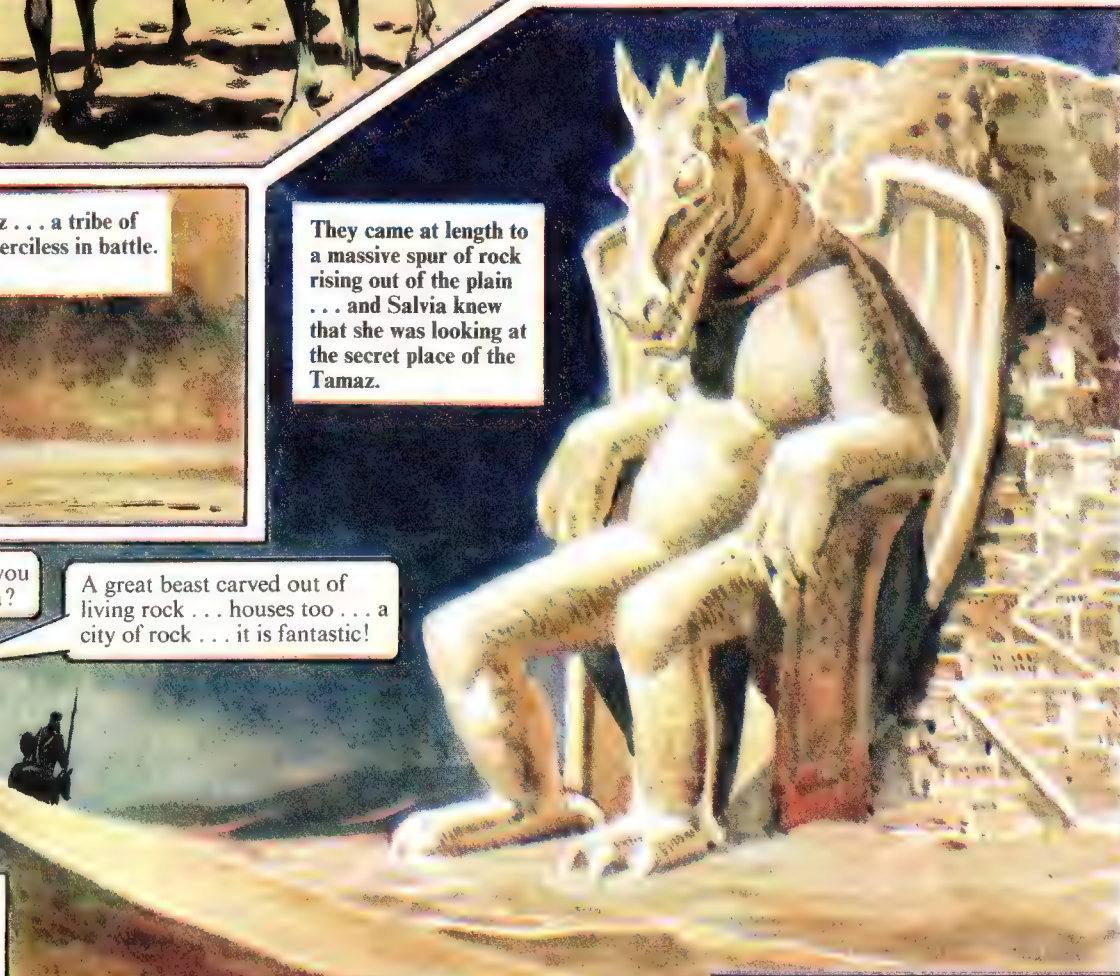
Keren and Salvia had heard of the half-legendary Tamaz . . . a tribe of women warriors who dwelt in the wilderness and were merciless in battle. The Tamaz had no pity for the exhausted pair . . .



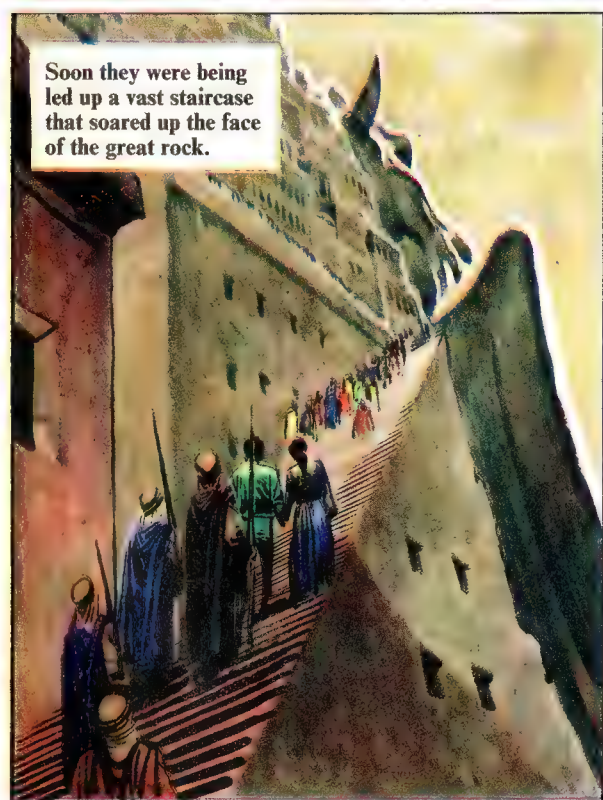
They came at length to a massive spur of rock rising out of the plain . . . and Salvia knew that she was looking at the secret place of the Tamaz.

What do you see, Salvia?

A great beast carved out of living rock . . . houses too . . . a city of rock . . . it is fantastic!



Soon they were being led up a vast staircase that soared up the face of the great rock.



They were taken, in silence, to an open space at the summit . . . and it was then that Salvia turned in alarm . . .

What . . . what are you going to do with us?



And the reply came . . .



It is necessary that you be sacrificed to the Sun goddess of the Tamaz! . . . Throw them over the edge!



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Salvia and Keren (who has been blinded) are journeying to the Sea of Azov to rescue the Emperor Trigo from a slave galley. They are captured by a tribe of veiled female warriors called Tamaz, and taken to their secret place in the wilderness, where they learn they are to be sacrificed to the Sun Goddess . . .



As Salvia and Keren were forced to the edge of the dizzy drop, one of the Tamaz cried out to the sky . . .

O Goddess Herim, who rules the twin suns of Elekton, accept these sacrifices, and save the life of our mighty Chieftainess!



On hearing the cry, Salvia turned . . .

What is wrong with your Chieftainess? . . . And how can our deaths save her life?

The Mighty One has been stricken with a strange sickness, and only Herim can save her! . . . *Proceed with the sacrifices!*



No! . . . You are blinded by your foolish superstitions! . . . I am an adept of the healing arts . . . Why destroy me, when I could cure your Chieftainess?



The girl insults the Goddess!

Destroy her!

No! . . . I say the girl should be given the chance to prove her words. After all . . . *twelve* have been sacrificed already, and Herim has not answered our prayers!



And so, the two prisoners were led to a vast chamber carved in the heart of that great spur of rock.

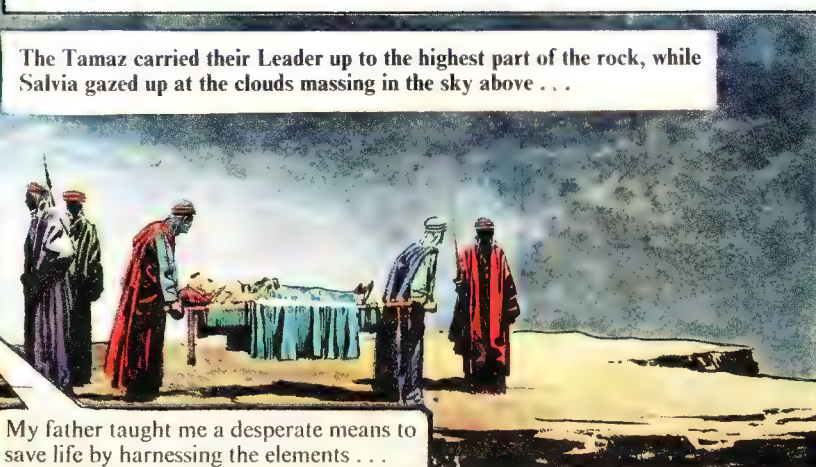
There lies Almara, Chieftainess of the Tamaz!



Salvia bent over the beautiful face of the unconscious Chieftainess . . . and . . .

Yes . . . I can cure her! Let her be carried up to the summit of the rock!

Can you really cure her?



The Tamaz carried their Leader up to the highest part of the rock, while Salvia gazed up at the clouds massing in the sky above . . .

My father taught me a desperate means to save life by harnessing the elements . . .



Salvia demanded certain herbs and chemicals, which the Tamaz were able to supply. Then, watched by the veiled women warriors, she mixed them in a container . . .

It is always dangerous to tamper with the elements . . . If Almara dies as a result of what I am about to attempt, they will kill us . . . But it is her only hope!

Is this cure dangerous?

And when this was done . . .

Now we must leave your Chieftainess here . . . Alone!

Your instructions will be obeyed . . . But if any harm comes to the Mighty One . . .

They descended to the plain below the great spur of rock, and looked up to the crest, over which black thunder clouds were massing . . .

What happens now, Salvia?

Wait . . . and hope!

Suddenly . . . it happened! . . . a great flame stabbed skywards from the container!

Instantly, the skies seemed to respond. A flash of lightning rent the clouds . . . and the Tamaz warriors cowered with terror as thunder crashed out overhead!

Goddess Herim protect us!

Aaaaaah! . . . This is evil magic!

As rain deluged down, another lightning flash ripped down from the sky and connected with the crest of the towering rock!

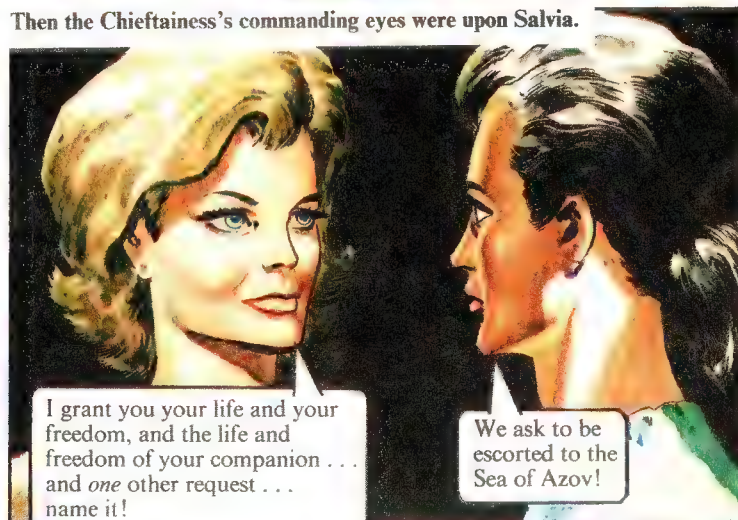
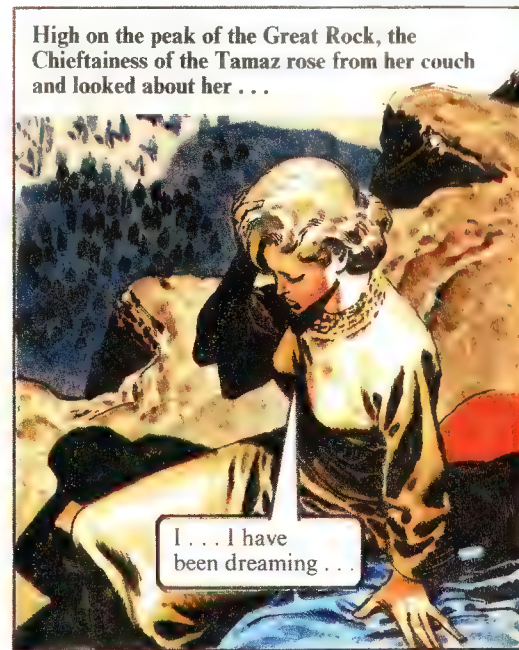
Forgetting their own fears when they saw this, the Tamaz turned upon the Trigan girl in fury.

She has deceived us! . . . She has used evil magic to destroy our mighty Chieftainess! . . . Kill them both!



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

While journeying to the Sea of Azov to rescue the Emperor Trigo from a slave galley, Salvia and Keren (who has been blinded) are captured by a tribe of veiled female warriors called Tamaz. Salvia attempts to cure the Tamaz chieftainess of a strange illness by harnessing a thunder-storm . . .



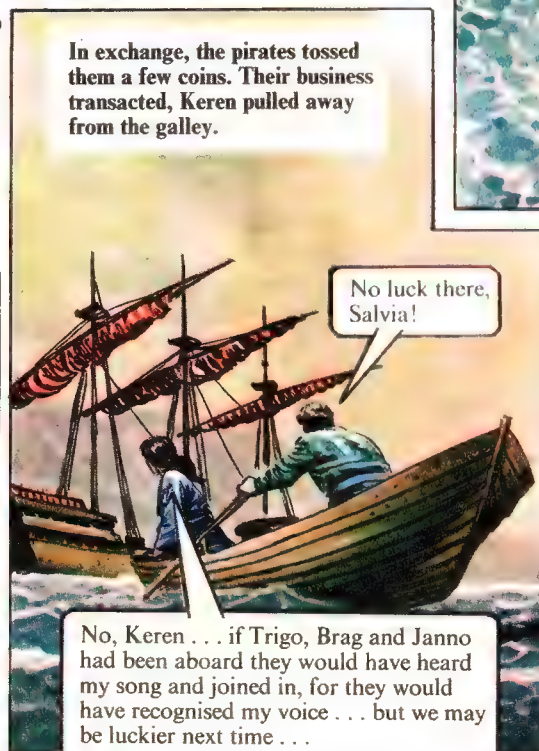
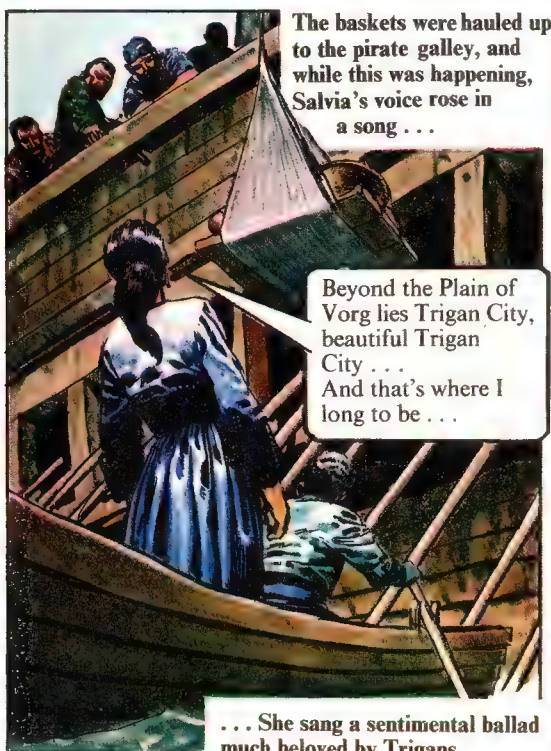
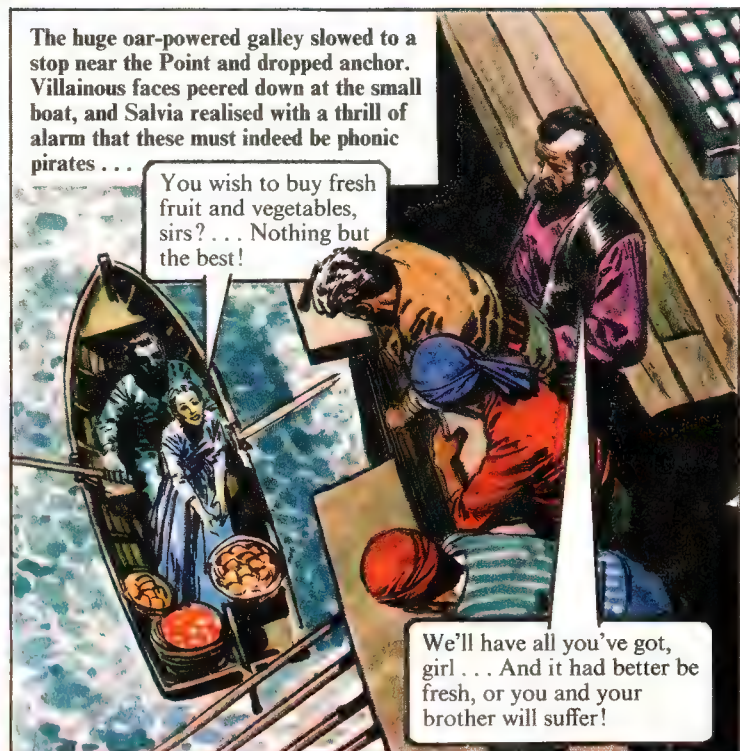
Almara agreed. So it was that the two Trigans rode safely through the vast, trackless wilderness with a strong escort of Tamaz warriors.







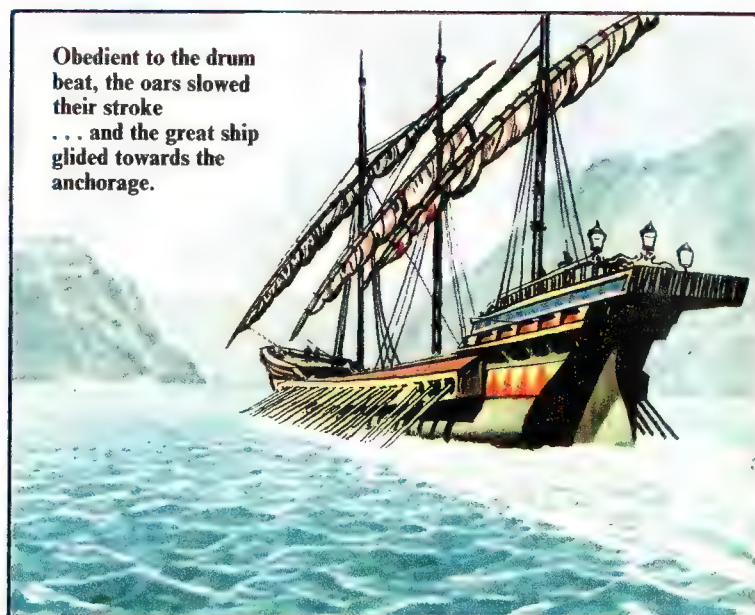
They had brought a small amount of money from Trigan City. Later that day, they purchased a boat from one of the local traders . . .





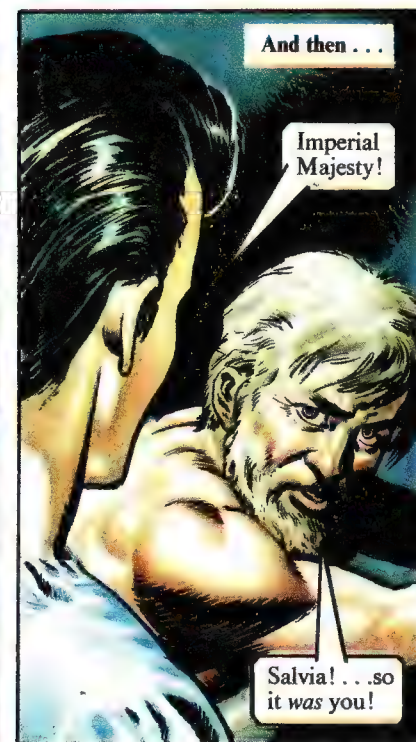
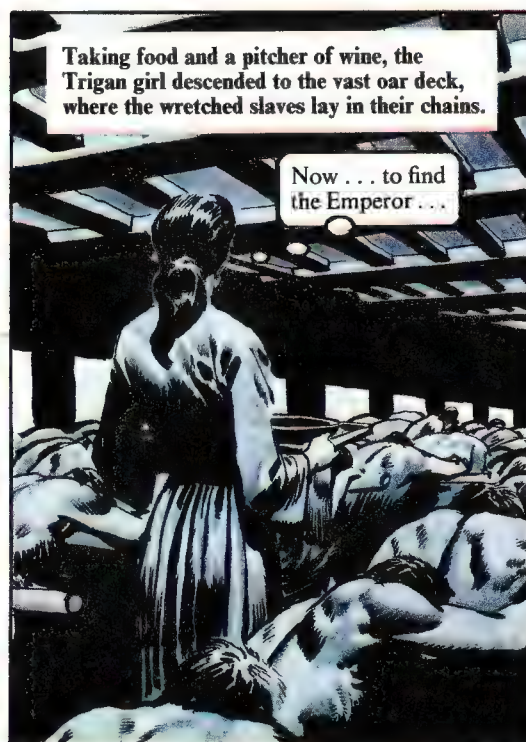
# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Salvia and the blinded Keren have come to the Sea of Azov to find the Galley in which the Emperor Trigan and his brother and nephew have been enslaved . . .





The captain agreed, and Salvia was put to work to help with the preparation of that night's feast. Some time later . . .



A few hasty words . . . and she thrust something into Trigo's hand.



The slave master saw the tell-tale weapon. In a trice, he drew his sword and raised it on high above the helpless girl . . .



But the blow never fell . . . instead, the brute fell backwards amongst the oarsmen as the ship lurched sickeningly — and outside a new horror threatened to engulf them all . . .

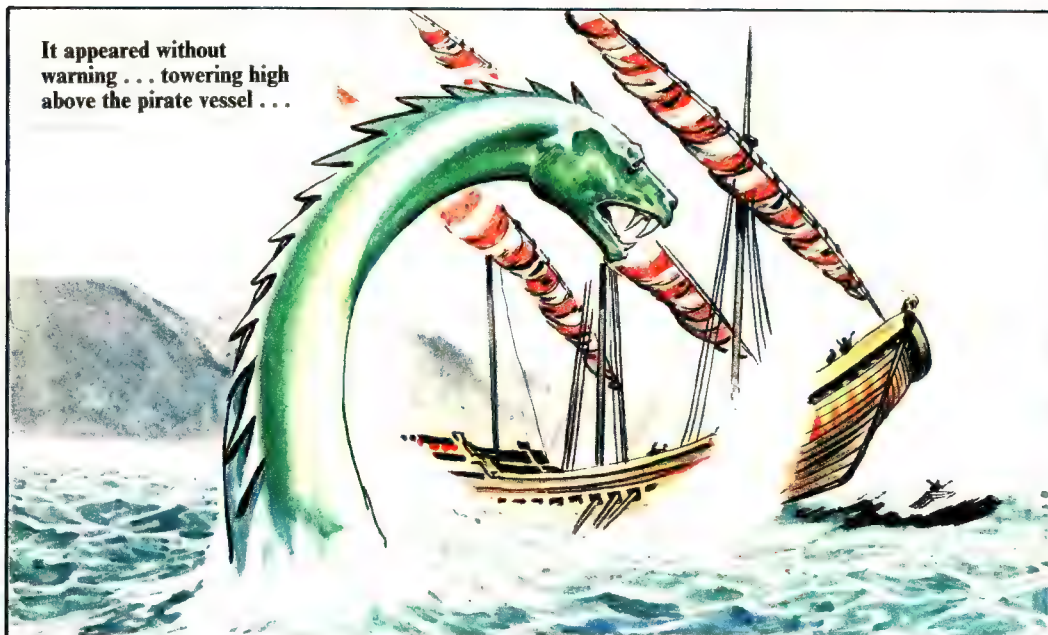




# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Salvia and the blinded Keren have found the Emperor Trigo and his brother and nephew slaving in chains in a pirate galley. Suddenly the galley is menaced by a fearsome sea monster . . .

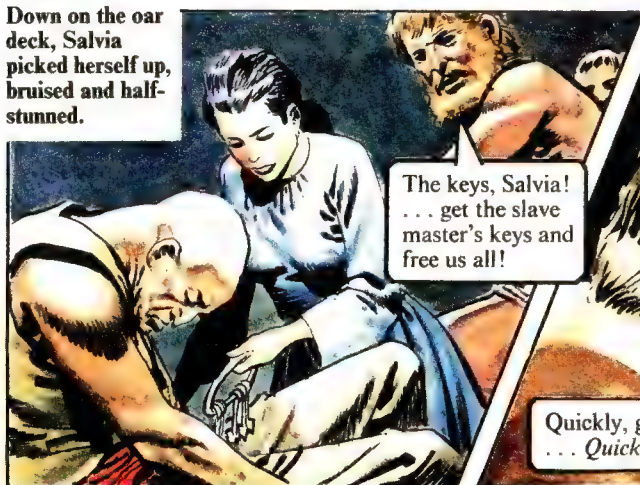
It appeared without warning . . . towering high above the pirate vessel . . .



Its massive tail flailed round, and the galley was all but overturned by a mighty wall of water.



Down on the oar deck, Salvia picked herself up, bruised and half-stunned.



The keys, Salvia! . . . get the slave master's keys and free us all!

Wrenching the keys from the belt of the unconscious man, Salvia hastened to obey her Emperor.



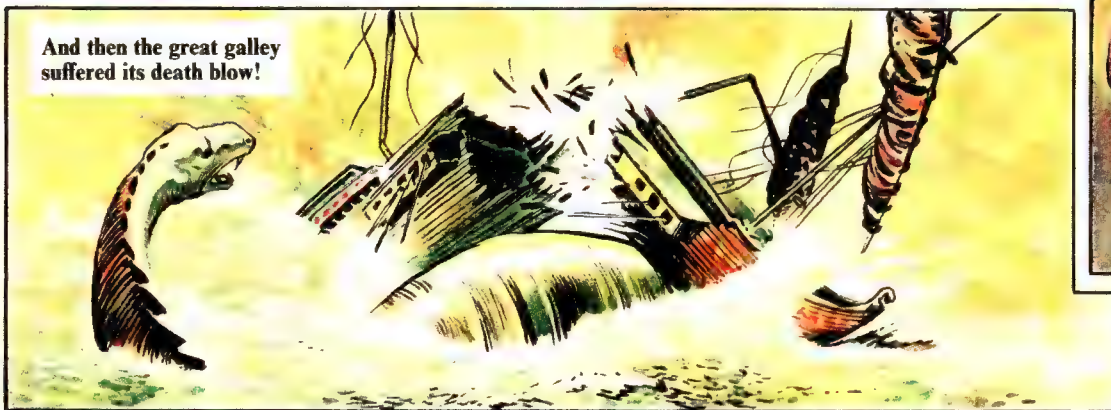
Quickly, girl . . . Quickly!

Many of the pirates had leapt overboard at the first appearance of the monster, but one man stood his ground . . . Das Kassa, the captain . . .

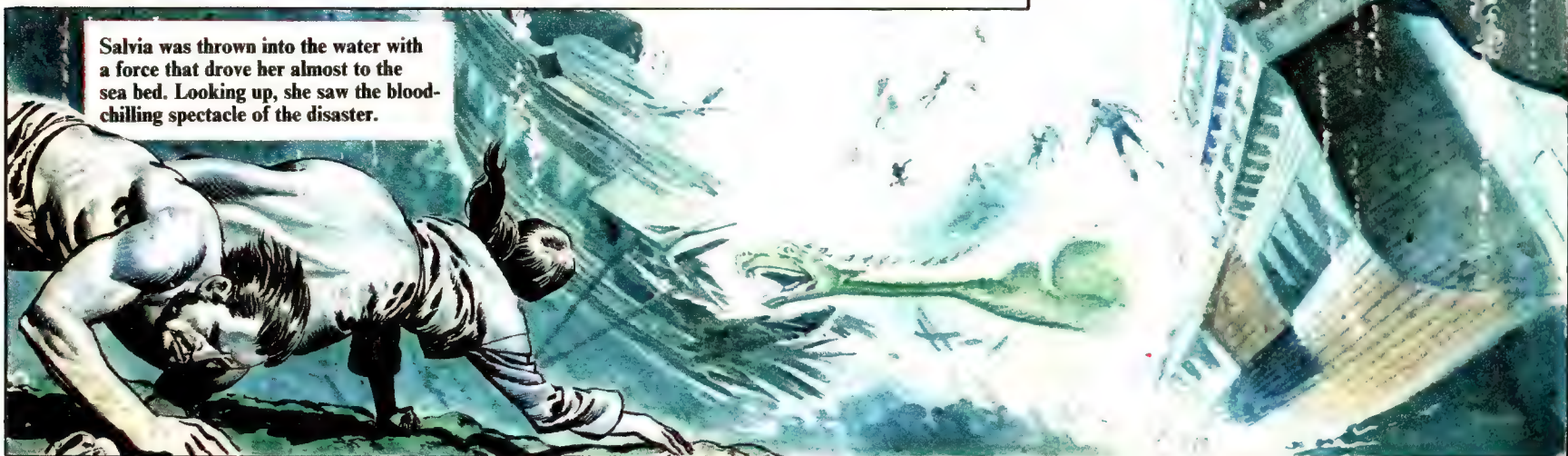


By the twin suns of Elekton . . . there's no stopping the brute!

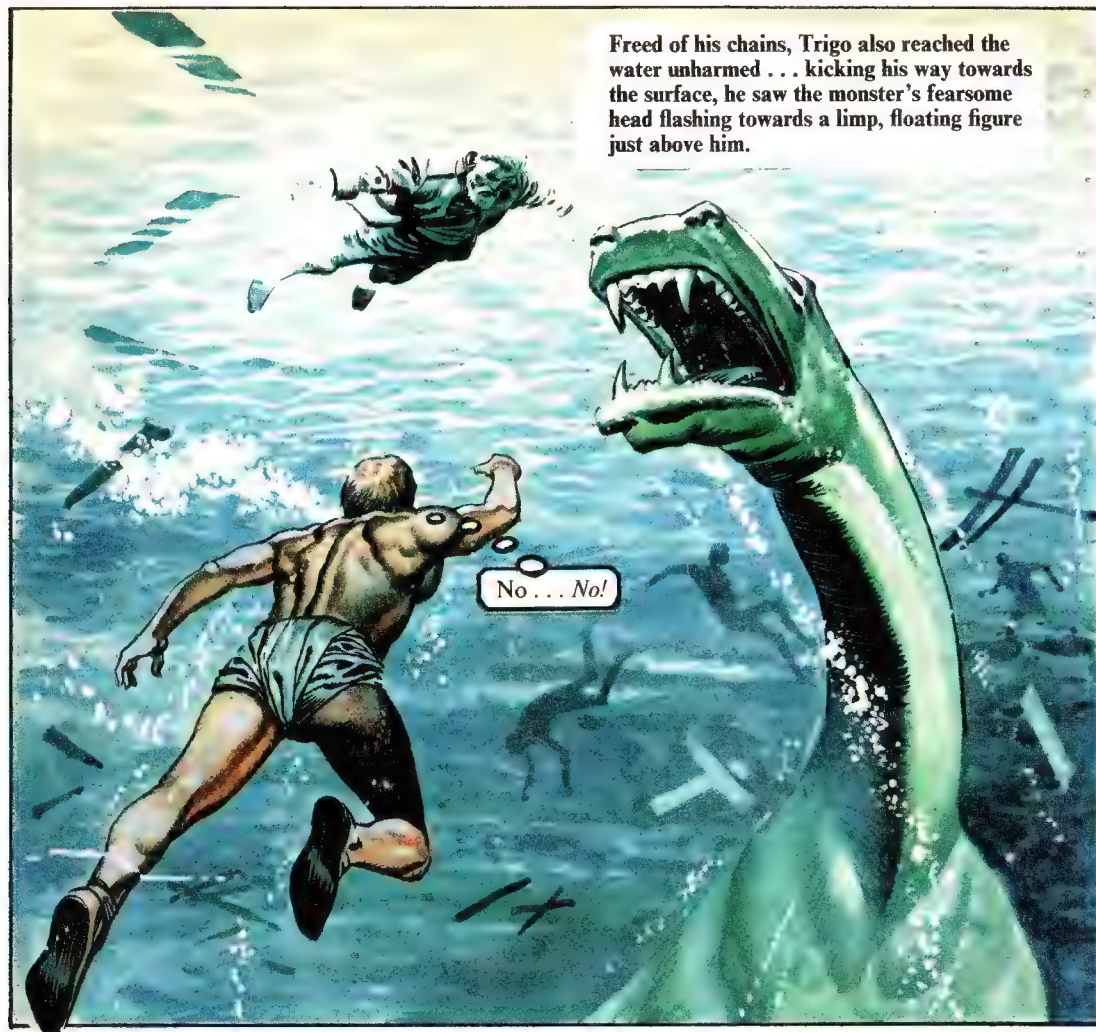
And then the great galley suffered its death blow!



Salvia was thrown into the water with a force that drove her almost to the sea bed. Looking up, she saw the blood-chilling spectacle of the disaster.





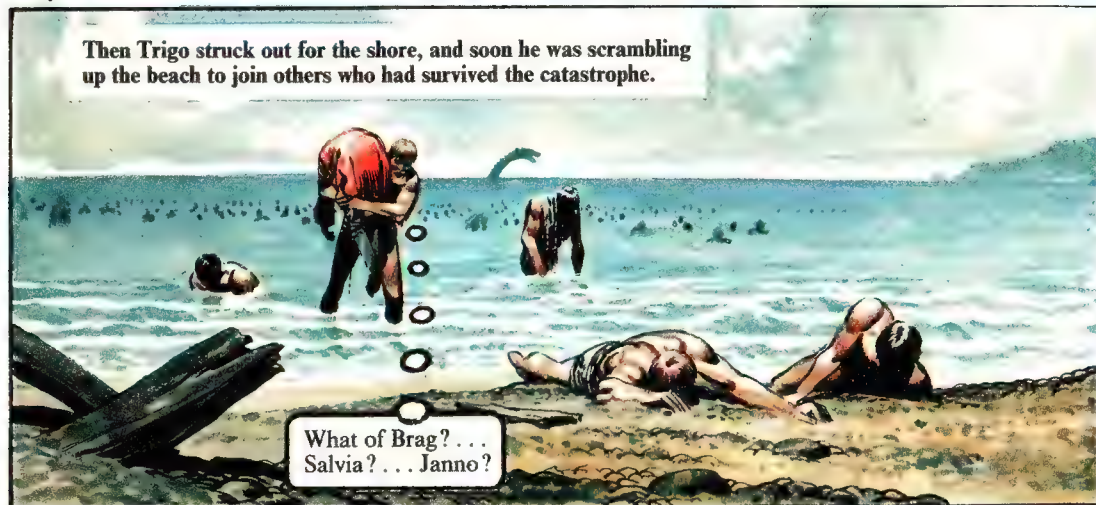


Freed of his chains, Trigo also reached the water unharmed . . . kicking his way towards the surface, he saw the monster's fearsome head flashing towards a limp, floating figure just above him.

No . . . No!

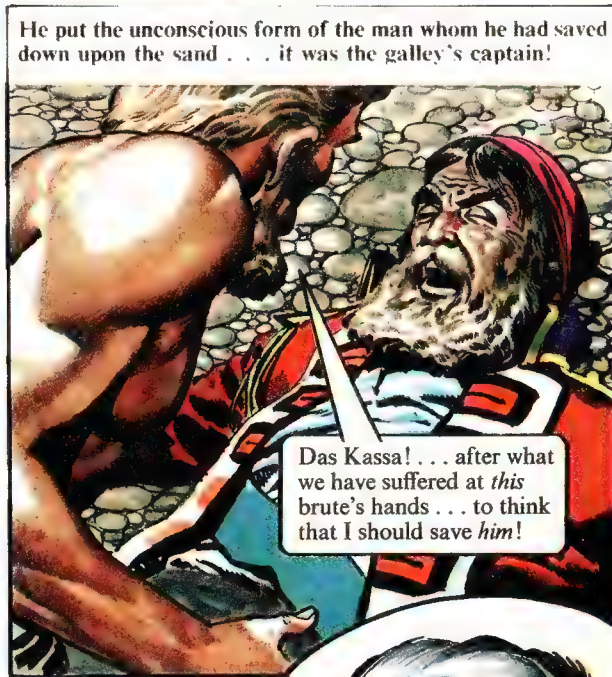


Reaching up, the Emperor seized the man by the ankles and dragged him from certain destruction!



Then Trigo struck out for the shore, and soon he was scrambling up the beach to join others who had survived the catastrophe.

What of Brag? . . .  
Salvia? . . . Janno?



He put the unconscious form of the man whom he had saved down upon the sand . . . it was the galley's captain!

Das Kassa! . . . after what we have suffered at *this* brute's hands . . . to think that I should save *him*!

Most of the swimmers had now reached the shore. And Trigo moved amongst them, calling out desperately . . .

First Brag answered, and then Salvia and Janno . . . but the girl had grave news . . .



Salvia! . . . Brag! . . . Janno! . . . are you here?

Brother!

Keren hasn't reached safety!

I didn't know Keren was with you . . . but he'll be all right, I'm sure . . . Keren can look after himself.

Aye, he can swim like a fish . . . he probably made for the opposite bank.



You don't understand . . . he's *blind*! How can he look after himself?

NEXT WEEK: THE SEARCH FOR KEREN



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

The Emperor Trigo escaped from the pirate galley when it was wrecked by a monster in the Sea of Azov, but the gallant, blinded Keren was not amongst those who escaped the catastrophe . . .



The Trigans looked out across the wreckage-strewn water . . . and Trigo spoke the thought that was in all their hearts.

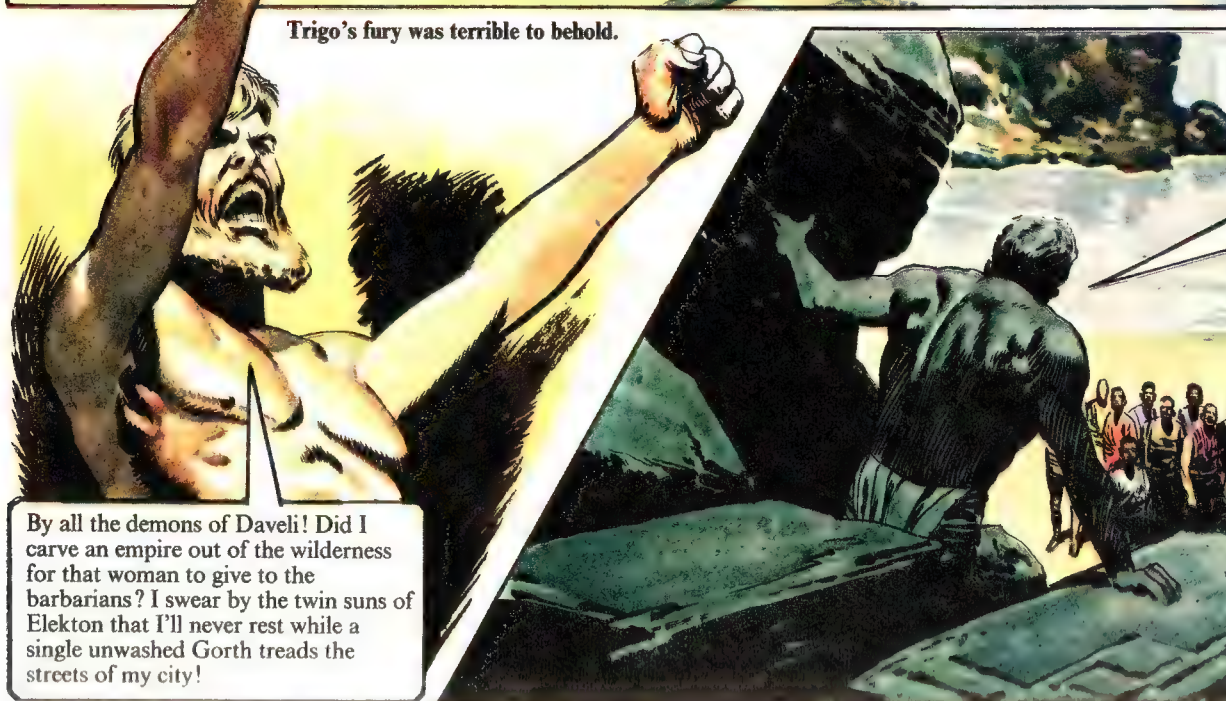
Keren is no more . . . he perished for the Trigan Empire!



Remembering his stern duty, Trigo quenched his grief and turned to Salvia . . .

And now . . . what news from Trigan City? . . . What of my treacherous niece Thara?

Giving out that you and your heirs were dead, Thara had herself crowned Empress . . . it was a short and disastrous reign . . . the city has been captured by a horde of Gorths!



Trigo's fury was terrible to behold.

By all the demons of Daveli! Did I carve an empire out of the wilderness for that woman to give to the barbarians? I swear by the twin suns of Elekton that I'll never rest while a single unwashed Gorth treads the streets of my city!

He turned to the galley slaves . . . lean and tough from their long toiling at the oar benches.

Comrades of the oar! March with me to Trigan City, and I will make you free citizens of the empire! . . . what do you say?



A roar of acclamation greeted his offer!

To Trigan City!

We are your men!

Long live the Emperor!



And then . . .

Das Kassa! . . . What do you want, you scoundrel?

You saved my life, Emperor, and a pirate has honour of a sort . . . just like other men . . .

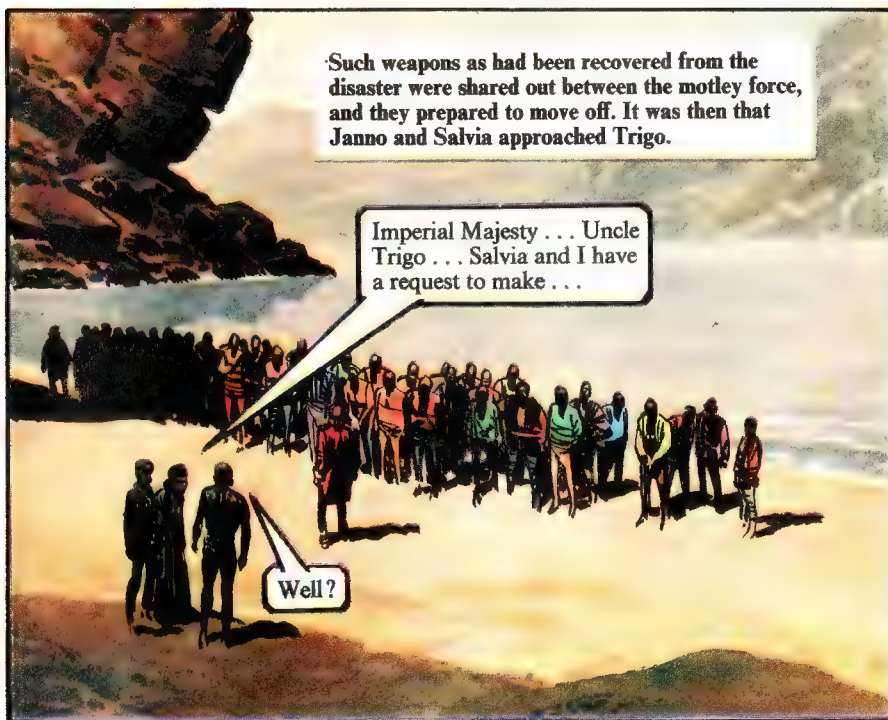
Wonderingly, Trigo took the huge hand that was offered to him.

My sword . . . and the swords of my men . . . are yours to command, Emperor! We will march with you!



I thank you, captain . . .

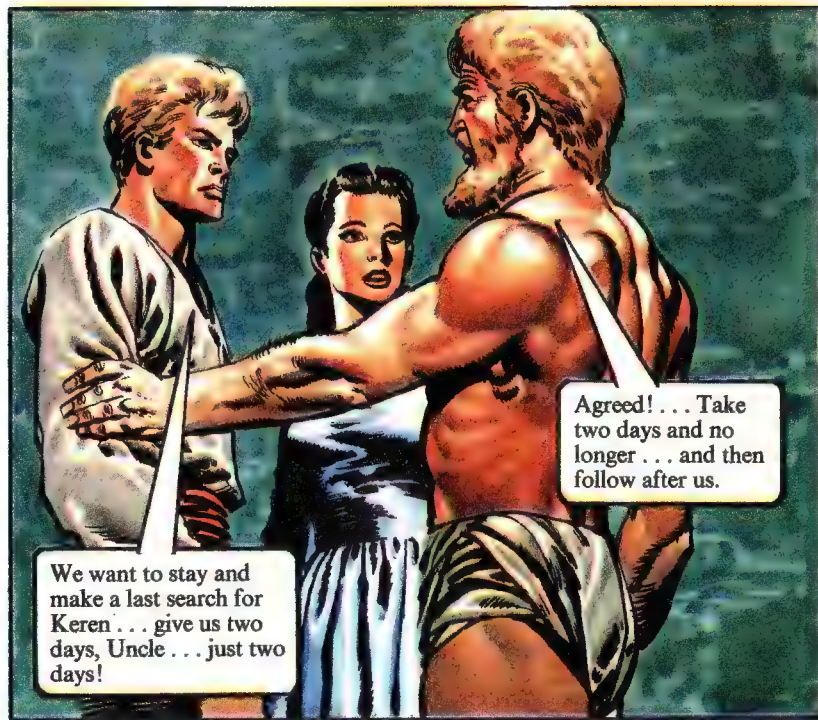




Such weapons as had been recovered from the disaster were shared out between the motley force, and they prepared to move off. It was then that Janno and Salvia approached Trigo.

Imperial Majesty . . . Uncle Trigo . . . Salvia and I have a request to make . . .

Well?



We want to stay and make a last search for Keren . . . give us two days, Uncle . . . just two days!

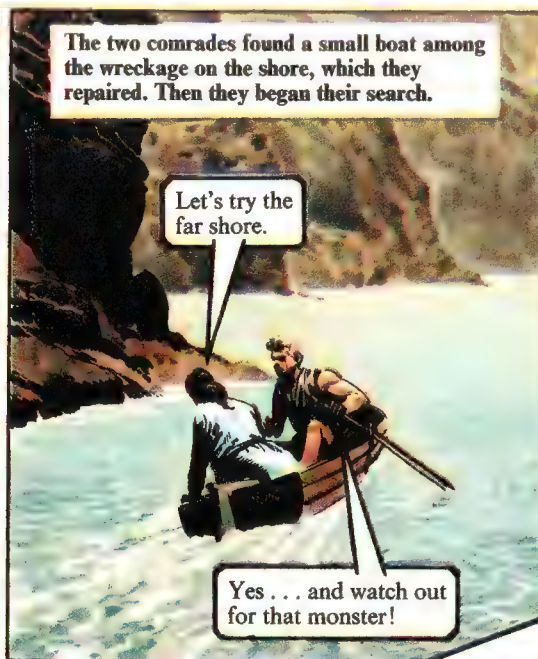
Agreed! . . . Take two days and no longer . . . and then follow after us.



Later, Salvia and Janno watched the small army set off across the plain towards distant Trigan City.

They are few in number to face the hordes of Gorth!

Yes, Salvia . . . but they have Trigo!



The two comrades found a small boat among the wreckage on the shore, which they repaired. Then they began their search.

Let's try the far shore.

Yes . . . and watch out for that monster!



For two long days they scoured the shores of the inland sea. They found wreckage in plenty . . . but of their friend . . . nothing!

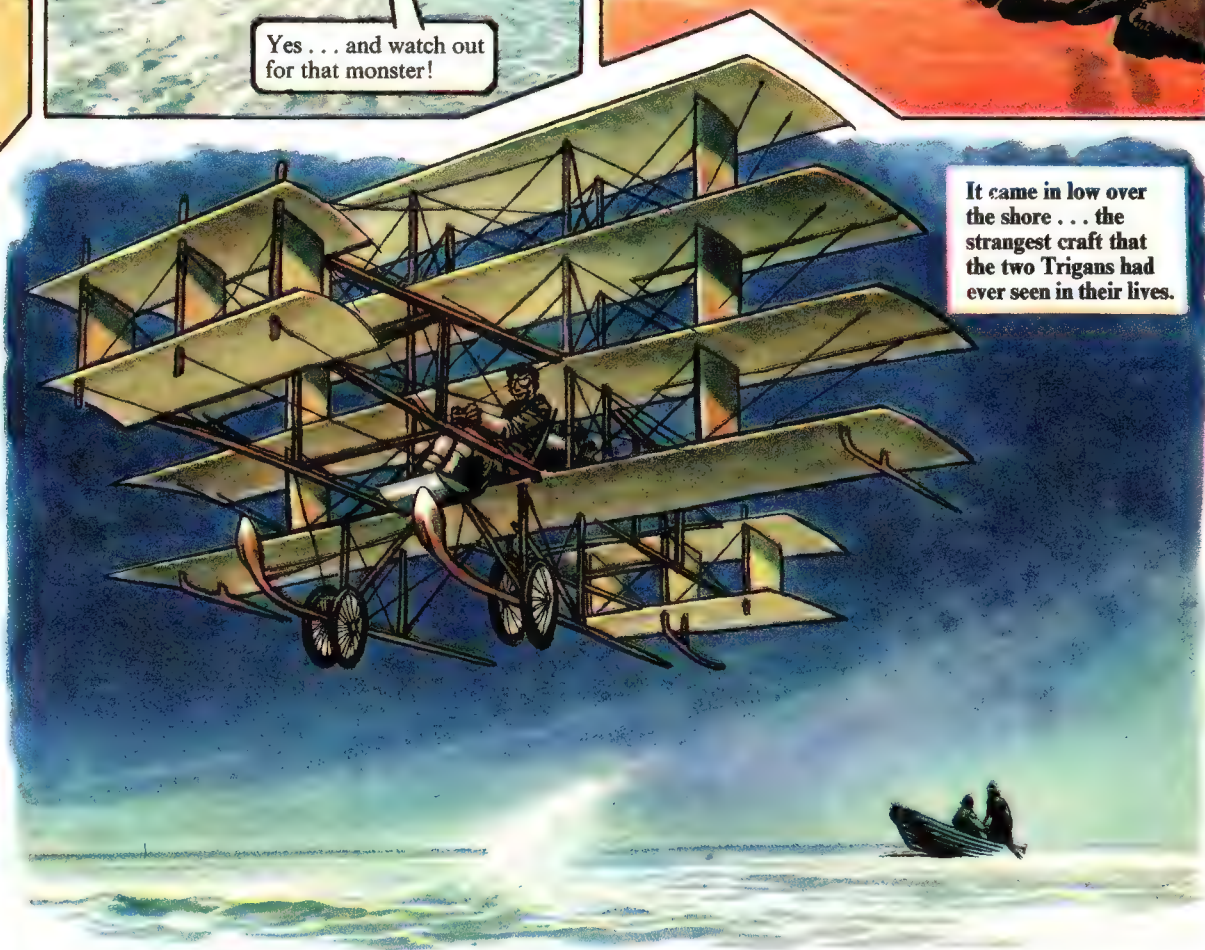
It's hopeless . . . and tomorrow we must turn back!



And then . . . out of the evening sky . . . a strange sound . . .

Janno! . . . Look!

By the twin suns!



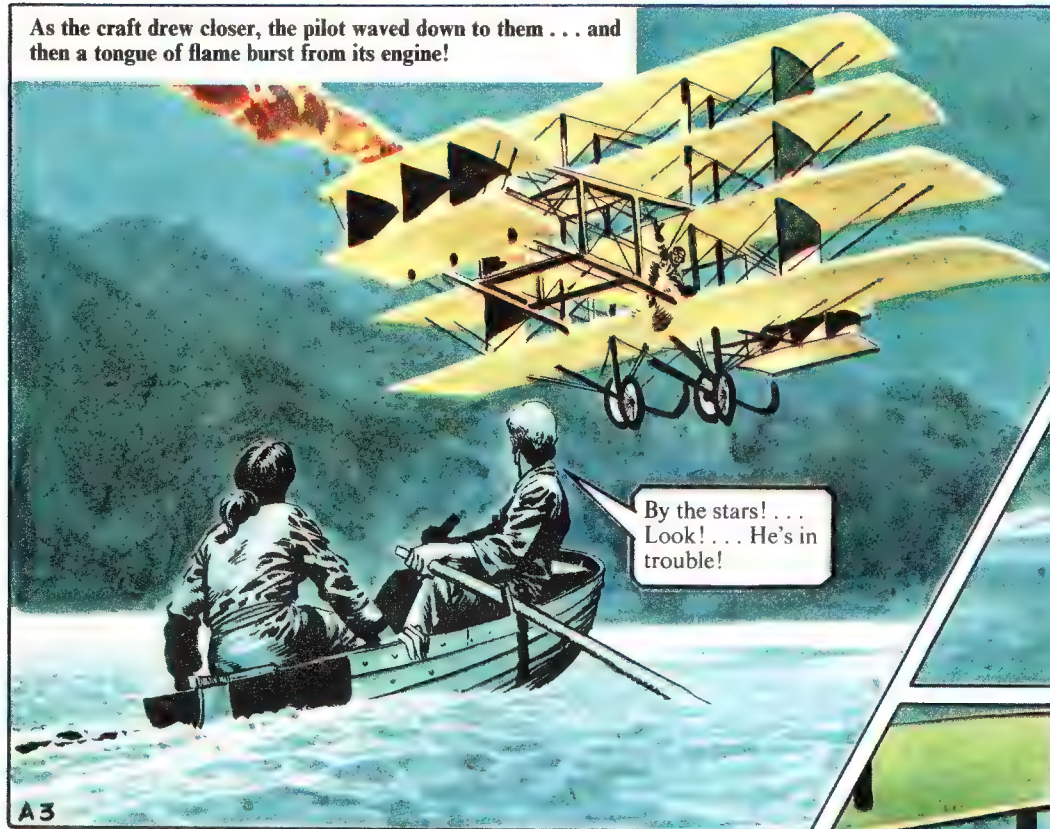
It came in low over the shore . . . the strangest craft that the two Trigans had ever seen in their lives.



# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

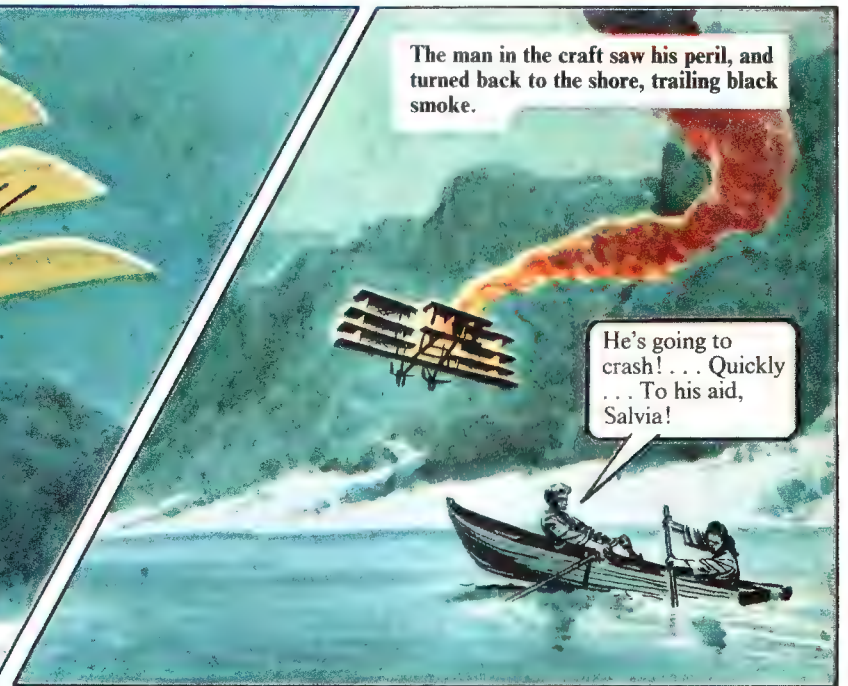
While searching for their comrade Keren along the shores of the Sea of Azov, Janno and Salvia sight a strange craft of primitive design . . .

As the craft drew closer, the pilot waved down to them . . . and then a tongue of flame burst from its engine!



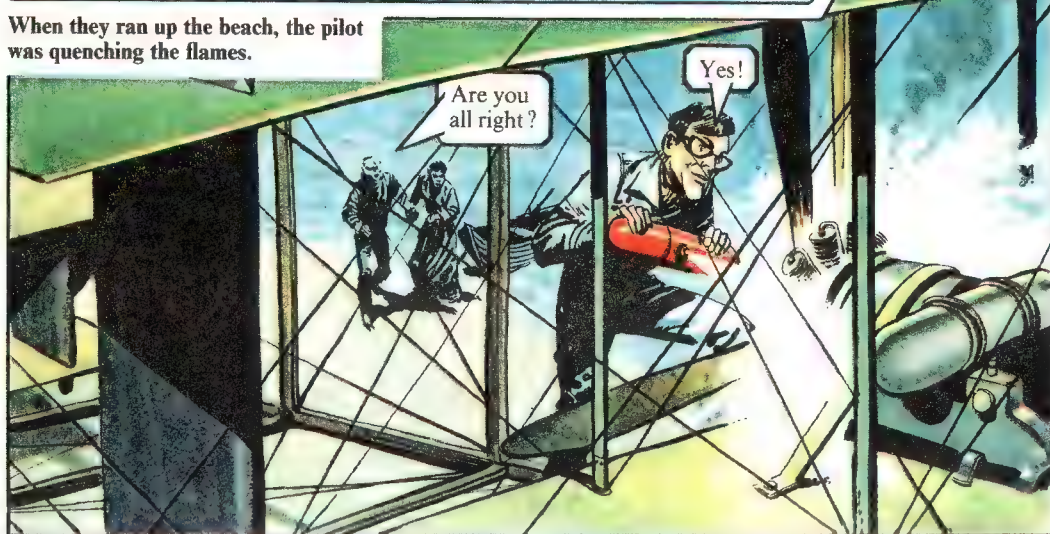
By the stars! . . . Look! . . . He's in trouble!

The man in the craft saw his peril, and turned back to the shore, trailing black smoke.



He's going to crash! . . . Quickly . . . To his aid, Salvia!

When they ran up the beach, the pilot was quenching the flames.



Are you all right?

Yes!

He was a pleasant-faced lad with humorous, eager eyes . . .

That was a narrow escape. I've still got a lot of problems with this craft, but I suppose I'll solve them all in time.



I hope so . . . for your sake.

And then . . .



You're Trigans, aren't you? . . . I can tell by your accent. We've got one of your fellows in Ellul . . . found him yesterday . . . A blind lad named Keren.

Their new friend introduced himself as Roffa, a citizen of the small State of Ellul . . .

How can we get to Keren?

In my flying craft, how else? . . . Get in, and I'll take you back to Ellul!

Keren? . . . Safe? Thank the stars!



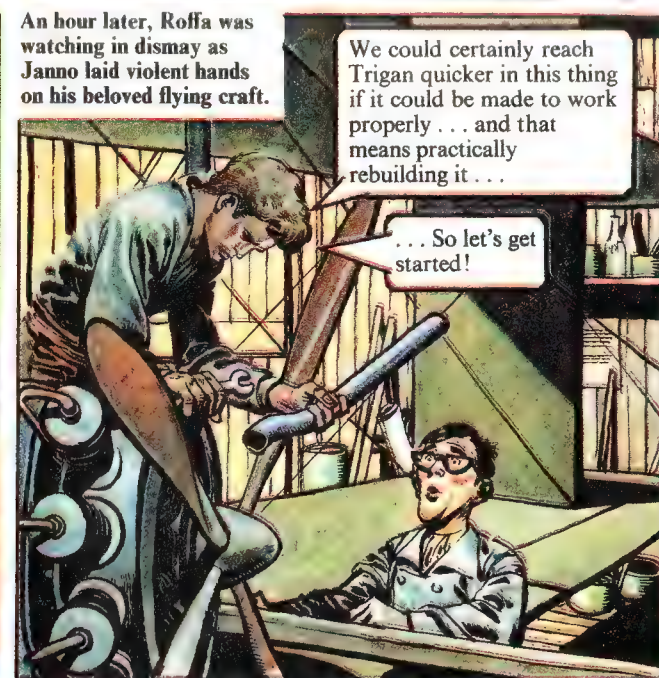
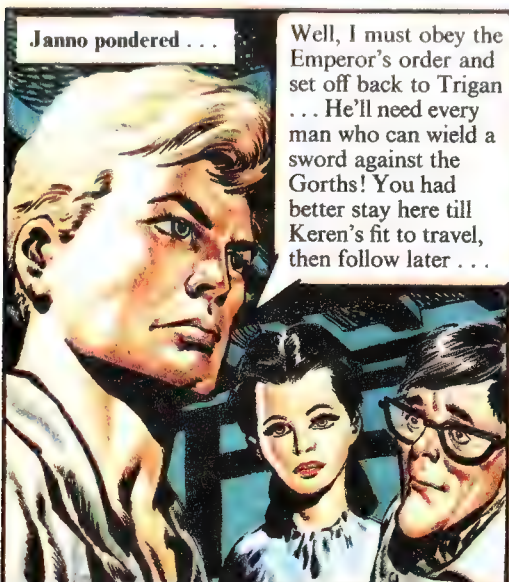
It was with grave misgivings that the Trigans trusted themselves to the primitive craft. But it lurched into the air . . . and they set off . . .



So you built this thing yourself, Roffa?

Yes . . . the people back in Ellul think I've taken leave of my senses. We're not very advanced scientifically, you know . . . Not like you Trigans . . . and the older folk want to keep it that way.





It was some days later . . . at dawn . . . that a small force of desperate, armed men reached the plain before Trigan City. The motley army of the Emperor Trigo had arrived . . . and Trigo was not a commander who wasted time . . .





# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

At the head of a motley army of pirates and former galley slaves, the Emperor Trigo is attempting to win back the city of Trigan from the conquering Gorth barbarians . . .

The surprise attack had failed. With his men falling all round him, Trigo cried out desperately . . .

Back! . . . Back! . . . Before we're all cut down!



They took cover amongst the broken rocks, and Trigo had a muttered conversation with Das Kassar.



How to reach the top of the ramparts, that's the question . . . once we can get within sword length of those animals, we can teach them a lesson!

There is a way . . . listen . . .

Trigo explained his desperate plan. Then shortly afterwards, a giant galley slave leapt from cover and hurled a lance . . .



The missile slammed into the massive woodwork of the city gates.

Another lance followed . . . and another . . .



Uuuugh!

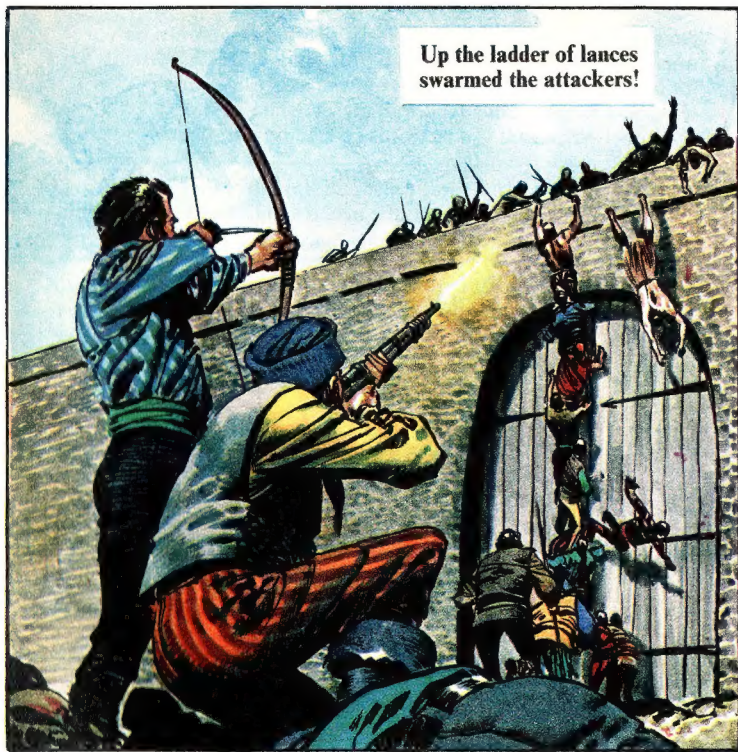
The Emperor was the first to reach the lance-studded gates . . .

And then . . .

Now!







Up the ladder of lances  
swarmed the attackers!



They reached the ramparts, and a  
desperate hand-to-hand struggle began.

From all parts of the  
city, the fierce  
Gorths came rushing  
to stem the assault,  
riding their wild  
krees along the  
broad ramparts.



Hey-yaaaaah!

The attackers were faring badly. Trigo fought shoulder-to-shoulder  
with Das Kassar, and they were being driven, step by step, back the  
way they had come.

By the moons of  
Elekton . . . how  
many more of  
these demons?



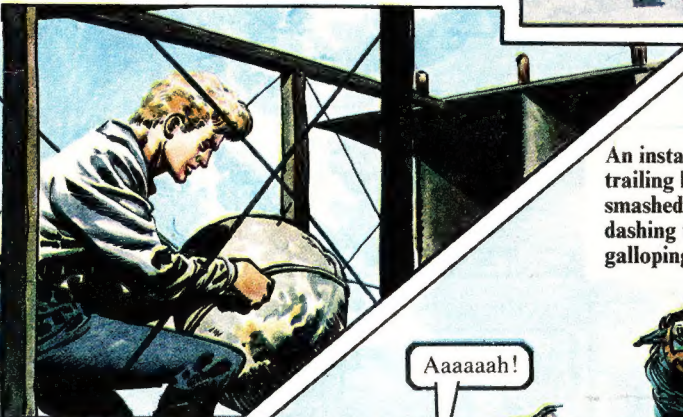
Trigo! . . . Look!

Suddenly Das Kassar saw . . . something . . .

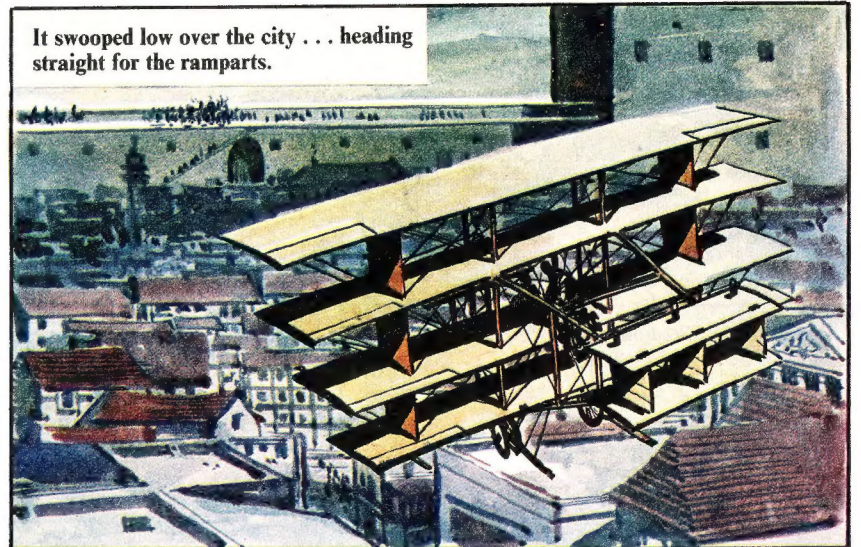
Janno was crouched behind Roffa . . .



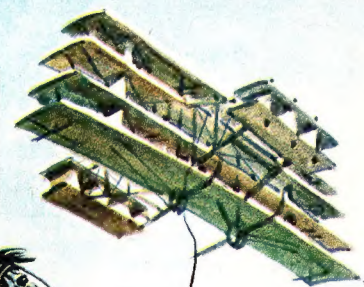
Lower the  
boulder, Janno!



It swooped low over the city . . . heading  
straight for the ramparts.



An instant later, a  
trailing hunk of rock  
smashed into the Gorths,  
dashing them from their  
galloping krees!



Aaaaaah!





# The TRIGAN EMPIRE

At the head of a motley army of pirates and former galley slaves, the Emperor Trigo is attempting to win back the city of Trigan from the Gorth barbarians. Things go badly for the attackers . . . till the arrival of a primitive flying craft bearing Janno and his friend Roffa of Ellul . . .

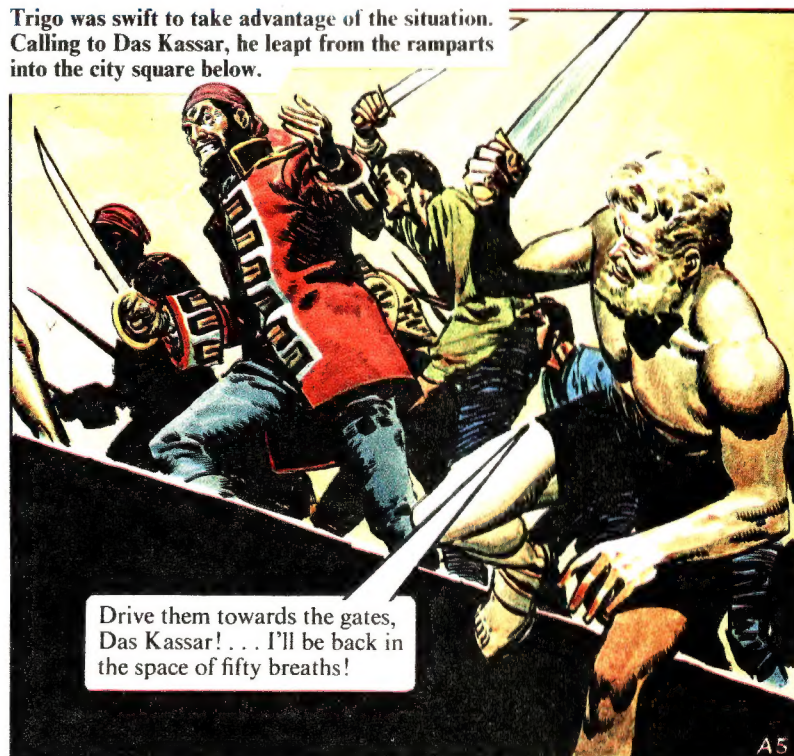
Once more, Roffa brought his strange craft sweeping low . . . and . . . the trailing boulder wrought havoc amongst the Gorths!



In the centre of the square stood a line of atmosphere craft which had not been touched since the Gorths took the city, because the barbarians had no technical knowledge. Trigo raced towards them, felling all who barred his way.

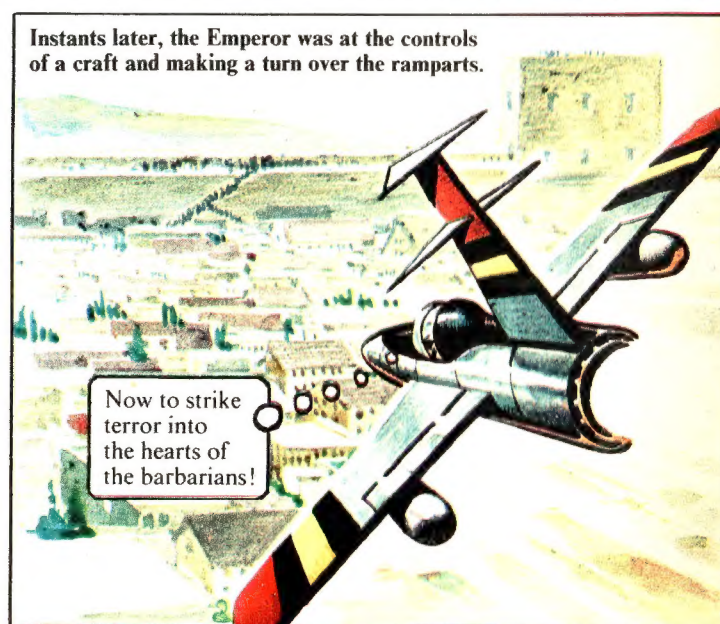
Uuuuugh!

Trigo was swift to take advantage of the situation. Calling to Das Kassar, he leapt from the ramparts into the city square below.



Drive them towards the gates, Das Kassar! . . . I'll be back in the space of fifty breaths!

Instants later, the Emperor was at the controls of a craft and making a turn over the ramparts.

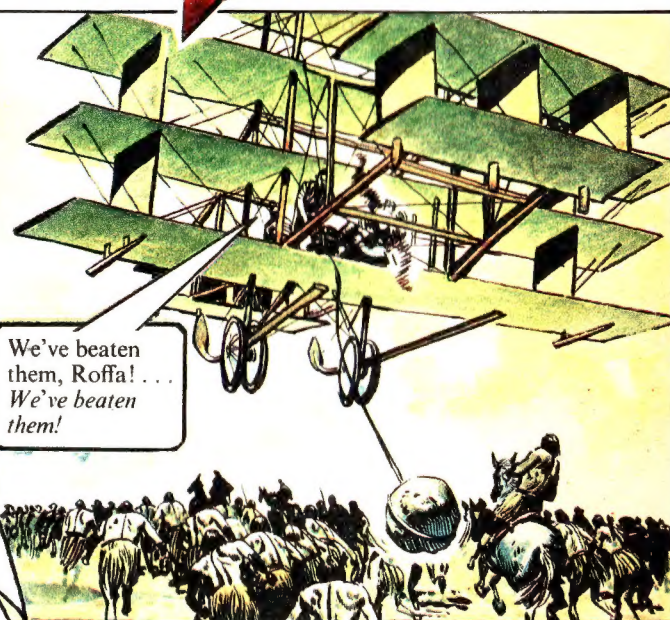


Now to strike terror into the hearts of the barbarians!

The Gorths saw the new peril descending upon them like an avenging thunderbolt. Flinging open the city gates, they streamed out in a panic-stricken mass!



We've beaten them, Roffa! . . . We've beaten them!



Broken and demoralised, the painted barbarians fled across the Plain of Vorg . . . urged on their way by the two youngsters in the primitive flying craft.

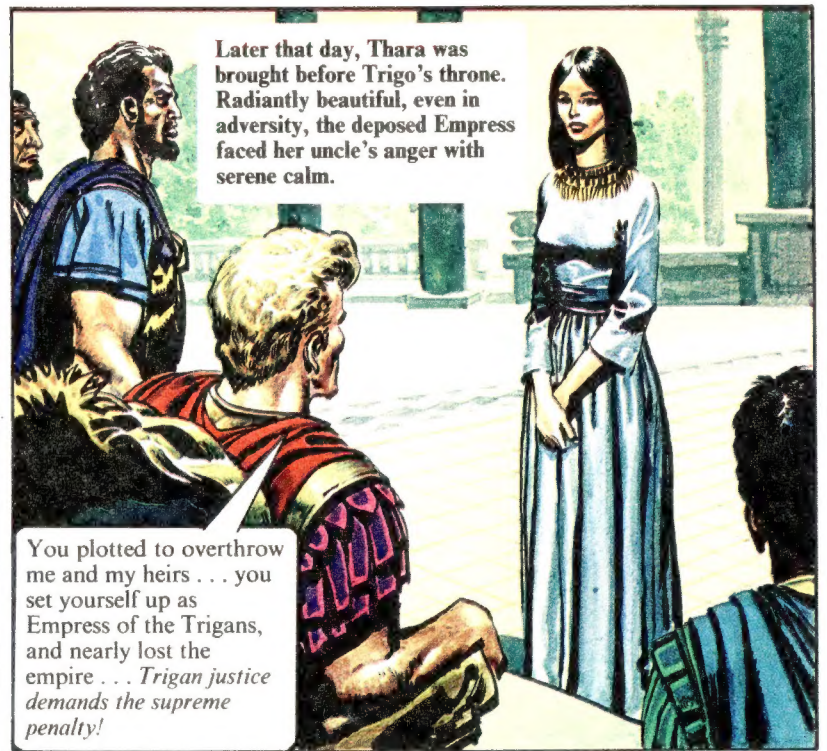




The battle was over and Trigo regained! Whilst all the bells of the city pealed out in triumph, the people swarmed into the great square to see their Emperor, whom they had thought to be dead . . .

Trigo lives!

The Emperor has saved us!



Later that day, Thara was brought before Trigo's throne. Radiantly beautiful, even in adversity, the deposed Empress faced her uncle's anger with serene calm.

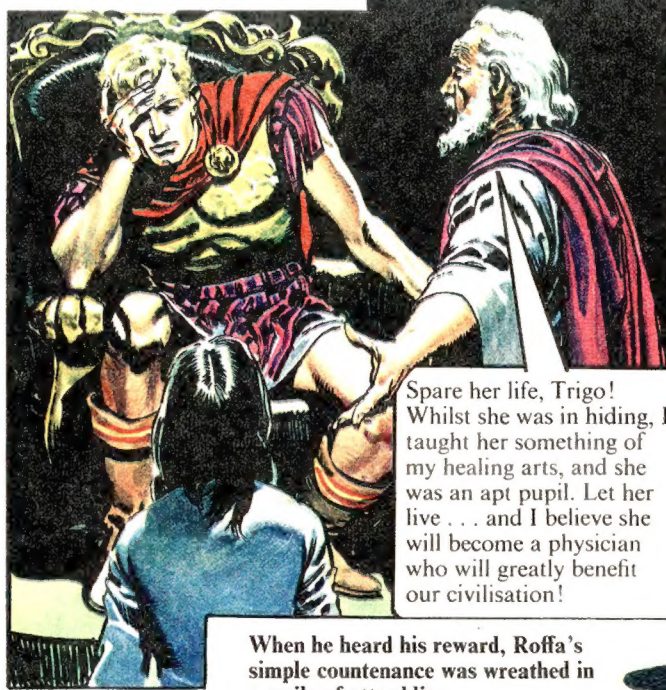
You plotted to overthrow me and my heirs . . . you set yourself up as Empress of the Trigans, and nearly lost the empire . . . Trigo justice demands the supreme penalty!



Imperial Majesty . . . I beg for mercy. Not for myself, but because, alive, I may be of some small use to the people of the empire I have so gravely wronged!

Indeed? . . . And what can you do for my people, Thara?

Wise old Peric spoke for Thara . . .



Spare her life, Trigo! Whilst she was in hiding, I taught her something of my healing arts, and she was an apt pupil. Let her live . . . and I believe she will become a physician who will greatly benefit our civilisation!

When he heard his reward, Roffa's simple countenance was wreathed in a smile of utter bliss . . .

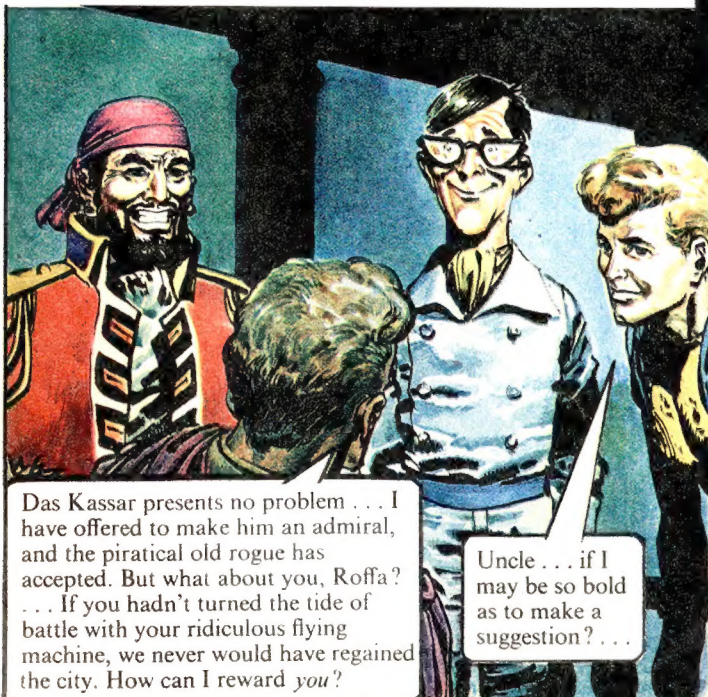
Trigo thought for a while . . . and then . . .



I agree! You have your life, niece! . . . Use it to save others!

Thank you . . . Uncle!

Having dealt mercifully with his niece, the Emperor's thoughts turned to rewarding those who had aided him in the desperate venture . . .

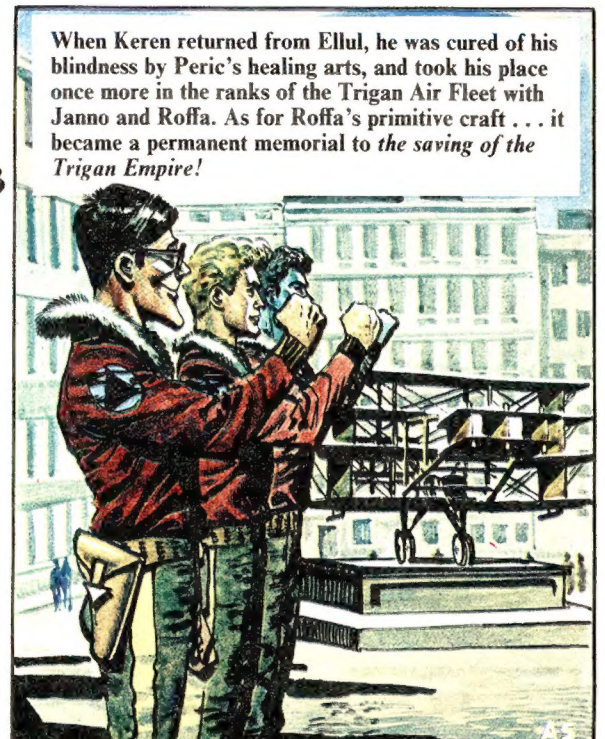


Das Kassar presents no problem . . . I have offered to make him an admiral, and the piratical old rogue has accepted. But what about you, Roffa? . . . If you hadn't turned the tide of battle with your ridiculous flying machine, we never would have regained the city. How can I reward you?

Uncle . . . if I may be so bold as to make a suggestion? . . .



Me? . . . An officer of the Trigan Air Fleet! . . . Just wait till the folks back in Ellul hear about this!



When Keren returned from Ellul, he was cured of his blindness by Peric's healing arts, and took his place once more in the ranks of the Trigan Air Fleet with Janno and Roffa. As for Roffa's primitive craft . . . it became a permanent memorial to the saving of the Trigan Empire!